

RED VIRTUE



THE "FURNACE" - A NEW TYPE OF HEATING SYSTEM
 FOR THE HOME - SEE PAGE 10

KILL WINTER

RED VIRTUE

*Home Relationships in the
 New South*

A PICTURE OF THE NEW SOUTH
 AND THE NEW SOUTH

LONDON
 OR
 NEW YORK
 THE NEW SOUTH

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i> I. Designing a New Man	<i>page</i> 9
II. It's Not Done—in the USSR	17
III. One of Five Million	40
IV. New Incentives for Old	56
V. "I Am a Worker!"	70
VI. Hobnails in the University	83
VII. Woman Freed	95
VIII. Love Must Be Changed	114
IX. Instead of the Family—What?	137
X. Frank Sex Teaching	149
XI. Fitting Misfits	163
XII. Ending Prostitution	176
XIII. Crime and No Punishment	188
XIV. Rulers from Infancy	206
XV. The Soviet Child at Play	223
XVI. Socialist Houses and Soviet Towns	251
XVII. Art Leaves the Ivory Tower	263
XVIII. To What End?	283
Appendix	303
Bibliography	307
Index	313

PREFACE

AN ACCOUNT of any phase of life in Russia should start with a historical survey. Since this book covers, however sketchily, the wide range of morals and manners, ethics, personal relationships, art, and culture, a historical survey has for reasons of space not been attempted. It must always be borne in mind, however, that Soviet Russia is not a fixed and static society; it is constantly evolving, and a photograph of it at any one stage is like a still taken out of a moving picture. Such a still is a faithful photograph only in reference to what came before and what is coming after. What is to come is as important a consideration in any discussion of Soviet life as a knowledge of what came before.

Thanks are due to the many Soviet men and women, "new" and "old," official leaders and citizens, for long and patient talks, and for the opportunities they gave to see beneath the surface of their lives.

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To Stanley Wood, California artist, I express my gratitude for his illustrations of the socialist speed scale, a new Soviet toy, and the map of Russia on page 257 with its real factories of symbolic size.

In quoting from Russian papers and pamphlets I have occasionally abridged passages without indicating omissions.

ELLA WINTER.

CHAPTER I

DESIGNING A NEW MAN

*Little by little a new man is being born. . . .
We must follow the exact processes of his birth.*

—ANATOL LUNACHARSKY

I WAS sitting in my room in Moscow one day when a young Communist¹ came in. On my table stood some wooden handicraft figures, gaily painted, carved by peasants. One represented a peasant woman, the Russian baba, with long full skirts, a bright-coloured shawl over her head and a pail in either hand. The Communist, a blue-eyed boy of twenty-two with fair hair and high cheekbones, picked up the little figure and swung the arms with the dangling water pails musingly. "Look," he smiled at last, "this is what we're building socialism² with. This!"

His remark brought home to me vividly, as it is forced on every visitor to the Soviet Union, how gigantic is the task the Soviets have undertaken. The little figure was quaint, picturesque, mediæval; what had she to do with the twentieth century, the conveyor belt, lathes, reapers and binders? Yet it is with the conveyor, the tractor, the most advanced machinery human science has devised, that this mediæval peasant woman and her man are being brought into contact to-day.

But not only machinery has come into their lives. New ideas, conceptions of which they never heard, institutions they never dreamed could exist, have come to their village, into their days, and are remoulding and changing life. Every adult in Russia to-day has gone through a crisis in his

¹ See page 15.

² See page 16.

or her personal life, a personal experience such as poets write epics and dramas about.

Soviet Russia is something new under the sun. There has never been a society (excepting possibly some primitive communities) without a slave or at least a subordinate class ; whatever the form of government, society has always been divided into groups that sheltered economic inequalities—of wealth, of opportunity, of power. The material existence, the special interests, of these groups or classes have influenced all social life, including art, poetry, love, philosophy, science.

It is not only the type of society that Soviet Russia has set out to create that is new ; her methods of attaining her objectives are original. A science of social engineering is being developed. In Russia to-day we see a race of people that has taken a new road and is leading a consciously planned life to a definite, pictured end. The Revolution³ is to lead to a society without classes ; a society without the inequalities and discriminations we know, economic, social, racial, legal, sexual. Inequalities due to innate differences, differences of intelligence, character, talent, will remain and develop ; but discriminations due to certain social factors are to disappear. Categories based on the ownership of property are to be wiped out.

Marxian theory, the basis of the Russian Revolution, must be grasped before a coherent picture of Soviet Russia can be formed :

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural

³ The term "the Revolution" covers more than the overthrow of the Czar and capitalism in 1917. It includes the first revolutionary uprisings before 1917 and the periods of War Communism, NEP, and the Five Year Plans.

science, and the legal, political, religious, æsthetic, or philosophical—in short, the ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness ; on the contrary, this consciousness must rather be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production.⁴

The majority of man's reactions to life are conditioned by his environment. It is difficult for the individual to see himself objectively, as the creation of certain forces ; perhaps their effect can only be known when they are removed. In capitalist society men react in many ways that are remains of traditions inherited from primitive times. To understand "why we behave like human beings" we often have to go back to our tribal ancestors. We study anthropology to understand twentieth century behaviour. Communists wish to create psychology knowingly : they set up conditions that are to enable man to react with awareness in certain foreseeable and foreseen ways ; his behaviour is to become predictable.

It is in the light of a Marxian interpretation of capitalism that Bolshevik⁵ theory and practice can best be understood. The basis of Soviet policy is the belief that the only solution of the unstable equilibrium of the class struggle, the only way of saving civilisation from decline, is the transference of power in society to the working class, the final abolition by them of class monopoly, and the introduction of a society without classes. But Marxian theory is not to be regarded as rigid, unalterable. "In no sense do we regard the Marxist theory as something complete and unassailable," wrote Lenin. "On the contrary, we are convinced that the theory is only the cornerstone of that science which socialists must advance in all directions if they do not wish to fall behind life."

It seems incredible to many who have not been in Russia that the fact that some own property and others work for them and are their economic "inferiors" creates certain cultural, social, psychological, and moral characteristics,

⁴ Karl Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*.

⁵ See page 16.

and that these change radically when the economic structure of society changes. The psychological reasons have been only slightly worked out, the reasons why, to quote Marx again, "The fact of ownership, carrying with it the power to command, develops with it the relation of superior and inferior, ruler and subject—and not only between those who own and control . . . and those who are propertyless, work for a wage, and obey." But the fact is clear to observers. The Revolution has already created a chasm between the Soviet Union and other countries. In many fundamental ways human beings behave, think, and feel differently than in other countries. The Revolution has influenced man in almost every phase of his life ; in his social relations and in his individual reactions. Men do not think about women the way they used to ; women do not think about work or marriage, children or cooking, the church or politics, as they did formerly. Art, literature, journalism, scientific research, philosophy, factory work, the words the young man whispers to his girl under the moon, the temper tantrum of the child crossed by its parents—these are different from what they formerly were in Russia, from what they are in our societies.

The kind of individual generated by our individualist, laissez-faire order is not developing in the Soviet Union. Human beings are constructing the new order, but the new order is also forming human beings. The Red Armyist⁶ actually has a different outlook from the old "soldier," and the citizens of the Soviet regard him differently. "How's your soldier friend ?" I asked Alexandra Mikhailovna the day after we had all picnicked together.

"Who ?"

"Your soldier friend."

"Whom do you mean ?"

"The man we were out with on the picnic yesterday !"

"Oh ! You mean Vanya ! I didn't know whom you were referring to. We've got so out of the way of calling our Red

⁶ This is a literal translation of *Krasnoarmeyets*, the word used to designate members irrespective of rank of the Workman-Peasant Red Army (the official name of the armed forces of the Soviet Union). The phrase "soldier of the Revolution" may be applied, poetically perhaps, to any one in or out of uniform who is fighting for communist ideas.

Armyists soldiers, we no longer even think of them as such."

It is not by accident or anarchically that these things are changing. The new man is planned as the new society is projected. The goal of communism is not merely to modernise factories, collectivise farms, or turn out Five Year Plan figures. The final purpose of communism is to create happiness for men, to lay the basis for the living of "the good life." The Soviet citizen devotes his life to the building of a socialist society because he is convinced that such a society will improve everybody's life. "We must do everything in our power to create a new man with a new psychology," said Lunacharsky in 1931, at a meeting of the Communist Academy, the highest scientific institution in Russia ; and this is a task for the Communist Academy as much as is a study of the refining of oils or the discovery of new processes of treating insect pests. Lenin wrote :

Our conception of socialism has radically changed on one point. All was previously centred for us in the political struggle, the Revolution, the conquest of power. Now our interests have shifted to the peaceful organisation of culture. We should like to concentrate all our forces on the problems of culture.⁷

Soviet policy is flexible and changes according to changing conditions.

What we are dealing with is a communist society not as it has developed upon its own foundation, but just as it is emerging out of capitalist society ; a society which still bears, in every respect, economic, moral and intellectual, the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it is issuing.

These words of Karl Marx, written over fifty years ago about the hypothetical society he was advocating, are true of Soviet Russia to-day. They must be borne in mind in everything that is read about Russia. In the fifteen years of its existence the Soviet Union has been through several epochs of history, so different from one another that in a slower period they might have covered centuries. The material conditions of life in these epochs have been different and so have psychological reactions.

⁷ *Essay on Co-operation*, 1921.

How much of the rudiments of civilised living many Soviet citizens still have to be taught is illustrated by a card of rules I found on a factory dining table.

BEHAVE CULTURALLY IN THE REFECTORY

1. WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE MEALS.
2. DON'T PUT YOUR HAT OR YOUR BRIEF CASE ON THE TABLE.
3. DON'T EAT OR DRINK WITH ANYBODY OUT OF THE SAME DISH.
4. DON'T TAKE SALT FROM THE SALTCELLAR WITH YOUR FINGERS.
5. DON'T TAKE MUSTARD WITH YOUR OWN KNIFE OR FORK.
6. DON'T SCATTER ON THE TABLE BITS OF FOOD OR CIGARETTE STUBS.
7. CARRY THE PLATE SO THAT YOU DON'T DIP YOUR FINGERS IN IT.
8. DON'T SPIT AND DON'T PUT RUBBISH ON THE FLOOR.

*The House of the Council of Sanitary Education of the
Municipal Department of Health of Nijni Novgorod*

The population of the Soviet Union—which covers one sixth of the earth's surface and embraces a hundred and eighty different nationalities, speaking a hundred and fifty languages or dialects—is in such varying stages of development that their reactions even to the same conditions would not be the same. A Siberian peasant who believes the sun is held in the sky by electricity (an actual belief that illustrates how modern and ancient conceptions are confused in their minds) will respond differently to the emancipation of woman or new forms of old institutions like marriage than will the Moscow factory worker or the professional revolutionary. Yet all three are "Soviet citizens."

Although our phrase "You can't change human nature" implies it is, a man's psychology is not fixed. In Soviet Russia one can in some respects almost see it change as material conditions are changed. The man of 1920 is not the man of

1927; the man of 1927 is not the man of 1932.⁸ The epochs of War Communism, NEP, and the Five Year Plan each required and produced different people.

The Five Year Plans are not schemes for collectivisation and industrialisation only. They are part of a programme for establishing a new society, for developing a new and newly functioning man. There was a First, now there is a Second, Five Year Plan for culture that deals with the cultural and spiritual life, the organisation of leisure, education, training in the arts, music, writing, in social-mindedness; which plans the propagation of new ethical and moral ideals.

But while the conscious plan is to change the functioning of human beings, the details of this development are not laid down. Russian leaders are learning as they go along; they have been confronted with problems, potentialities, and effects they had not foreseen. G. T. Grinko, one of the vice-chairmen of the State Planning Commission, says one reason why the first programme was laid down for five years only was that "the gigantic problems of the new period are now only beginning to be realised." And Lunacharsky says, "Little by little a new man is being born. . . . We must follow the exact processes of his birth."

⁸ See page 16.

¹ The Communist party accepts members who are not peasants or workers only after they have passed examinations and in the case of certain "former people"—the former bourgeoisie and their children—only after they have passed successfully through a period of probation. Any member of the Party is liable to expulsion for a breach of Party discipline. The Party organisations for youths and children are: Octobrists (October Children, singular, Oktobriionok) up to seven or eight years of age; Pioneers, from eight roughly to seventeen; Comsomols, to about twenty-two. A Comsomol is a member of the League of Communist Youth. These members are in Russia called Komsomolets (masc. sing.) and Komsomolka (fem. sing.); here both are generally called Comsomol. After that a Comsomol becomes a full-fledged Party member. The lowest Party unit is called a cell. In other countries the Communist party is organised in similar groups, except for Octobrists. October or the Great October signifies the seizure of power by the Soviets, October 25, 1917, by the old Russian calendar, November 7 by the world calendar adopted by Russia after the Revolution.

Communist is spelled with a capital letter in this book when it indicates a member of or the principles of the Communist party, while communist with a small letter indicates the person who accepts or the principles of

communism as a political theory. In conformity with Russian practice, Party is capitalised when it means the Communist party, which is the only legal political party in the USSR and a controlling force in the government.

² A socialist society—the first stage of communism—is one in which the proletarian state still exists and in which there are differences in wages. What is destroyed are those things that make for economic class differences. Under a communist society there are to be no economic classes and the state will have “withered away.” The standard for the distribution of work and wealth is to be “from each according to his ability; to each according to his needs.”

Between the Socialist and Communist parties in countries outside the Soviet Union there are differences of aim, of immediate programme, and of the means of putting the programme into effect.

³ Bolshevik is the name of a wing of the old Social Democratic party, so called because it was the majority party (from *bolshe*, meaning “greater”). The Mensheviks were the minority (from *menshe*, meaning “less”). Immediately after the Revolution the name of the Russian party was changed to Communist, on the advice of Lenin, to distinguish it from the social-democratic parties throughout the world who call themselves socialist.

At his first address at a Bolshevik congress after his return from Switzerland (April 7, 1917, old calendar), Lenin proposed the change to the name Communist: “In my own name I propose that the name of the party be changed, that it be called the Communist party. The name Communist will be understood by the people. The majority of the official Social Democrats have betrayed socialism. . . . You fear to break faith with old memories. But in order to change one’s linen, one must take off the soiled and put on clean. Why reject the experience gained in the world struggle? The majority of the Social Democrats all over the world have betrayed socialism and have gone over to the side of their governments. . . .

“The name Social Democrat is inaccurate. Do not stick to an old name that has decayed through and through. Have the will to build a new party . . . and all those who are oppressed will join you.”—LENIN, *The Revolution of 1917*, Book I, pages 102–103. (International Publishers.)

Soviet, the name of the form of government which grew up through the revolutionary organisations of Councils of Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers’ Deputies, is distinguished from other parliamentary forms of government in that it is based on occupational rather than geographical representation. Soviets were first formed during the Revolution of 1905, but later dissolved.

⁴ War (or military) Communism (1917–21) was the attempt to socialise outright all forms of production and distribution under the compulsion of foreign intervention and civil war (as the American Government under the stress of war took over the railroads, and rationed food and other commodities).

The New Economic Policy (1921–28) was the return to the original programme, which aimed at state control of basic industries and natural resources but left smaller enterprises of production and distribution to the initiative of the private capitalist or Nepman. The first Five Year Plan (1928–33, but to be completed in four years) marked the abandonment of NEP when the Soviet Government felt ready to embark on a complete programme of socialisation of industry and collectivisation of agriculture.

CHAPTER II

IT’S NOT DONE—IN THE USSR¹

What coincides with the interests of the Proletarian Revolution is ethical.

—EMELIAN YAROSLAVSKY

A VISITING school teacher was examining a class in mathematics. “If I buy a case of apples for 25 roubles² and sell it for 50 roubles, what do I get?” he asked.

“Three years in jail,” chorused the class.

This is a well-known Soviet anecdote, which however reflects a fact. These Russian school children are already imbued with the new ethics of their society. They know “it isn’t done” to make a profit, speculate, live off rent, interest, or dividends, make a show of wealth if you have it—as a few writers and artists have. Children, who are sticklers for the conventions, cold-shouldered their little NEP companions

¹ The USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), the official name of the federated Soviet Union, is composed of seven Republics, each of which has autonomous republics and regions in it. The seven are: European Russia, the Ukraine, White Russia, Transcaucasia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan. More than three-quarters of the population of the Union inhabits the European part.

The USSR occupies about one-seventh of the total land area of the earth, making it the largest country in the world with the exception of the British Empire. Its population is about 161,000,000.

Russians have the habit of contracting long names, and do not use periods in abbreviations like USSR, NEP, OGPU.

² A rouble contains 100 kopecks and its value is officially fixed at 1.93 roubles to the dollar, which makes it worth in Russia a little more than fifty cents. However, roubles cannot be taken out of the country and are not exchangeable into dollars. On the illegal exchanges roubles are said to bring fifteen or twenty to the dollar. It is practically impossible to compute the real value of money in the USSR; many services are free or practically free and the “goods of life” to the Soviet citizen come to be measured less and less in monetary terms.

during the NEP period, as little girls in an exclusive English school would cold-shoulder the washwoman's daughter if she were taken as a pupil. In Russia you do not mix—at least not on any footing of equality—with the former prosperous people.

How deeply the new ethics have already penetrated in some cases is hardly credible to those who have not visited the Soviet Union themselves. Particularly young Communists have already a new standard of values. Our feelings about what is permitted and what is "not done" are almost instinctive reactions. One might find it difficult to put into words what one "would not do," but when the situations arose one would know very well. In the Soviet Union one is embarrassed by behaviour and conduct, even attitudes of mind, that are taken for granted as the behaviour of the "best people" with us.

The differences embrace changes in all fields of life. Private morals have changed; medical, legal, military—all professional ethics; and business and social ideals. Some of these changes are already expressed in fact and institution; others lie in subtle distinctions of attitude only. Some Bolshevik behaviour is already instinctive reaction; other standards are but in the building. Often their behaviour is no different from ours; certain conduct deemed unbecoming to a communist would be deemed unbecoming to a gentleman anywhere. But the reasons for that will probably be different. What should be Bolshevik conduct in all matters communists themselves are not yet agreed on. Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, at a Party conference of 1924 asked that it be definitely stated what was permissible behaviour for a communist and what not, as different disciplinary measures were being taken by different groups. There have been burning and passionate discussions of the new ethical standards, and Party authorities have laid down varying principles at different times. One chapter cannot deal with all the new standards of conduct, but some examples will be given, and the means described whereby the old standards are consciously being changed.

It's not done in the Soviet Union to perform work merely

for the sake of money or other material rewards. The remark commonly heard in Hollywood, "Of course I'm only here for the sake of the money in it," is unthinkable in Russia. A person who made it would be considered unfit for decent society.

Our everyday accepted business principles: "Make all the profit you can." . . . "Charge all the traffic will bear." . . . "Each man for himself and the Devil take the hindmost"—the practice of these makes the practitioner socially despised in Russia. To meet economic needs of the moment peasants are allowed legally, now, to charge all they can get for their butter and eggs and meat in the private market; but they are despised when they do it, as NEP traders were. The marks of belonging to the "better" classes of our society, of having a "bourgeois mentality," consign you to the lower "social" ranks in Russia. And the stigma that attaches to such is about like that which would attach to an ex-convict in a Park Avenue drawing-room, and for similar reasons; the communist looks upon the possessing class as a robber class, which lives upon the labour of the workers and peasants.

The fundamental human urges of vanity, pride, ambition, the desire for approbation, the wish to stand well with one's fellows, these are as strong in the Soviet Union as in our world; young Russians want as much as anyone else to do the "done" thing; what is done and what is thought are stronger incentives to behaviour even than with us. But other merits win approval there. I was dining once at the house of an ex-lawyer who had some wine of the old days left. He kept looking nervously at the partition between his room and the next, fearful lest his neighbour hear the noise of the corks and report scathingly to the whole apartment next day. It is ill-bred to own more than your neighbour, or if you do to make any display with it. The contrast between riches and poverty, a common sight in the capitalist world that the rich do not usually take pains to hide, is considered bad taste in Russia. I have met women there who still own jewels but have not taken them out of their cases for ten years.

The whole matter of the outward life of the Soviet citizen has been much discussed. All shades of opinion, some extreme

to the point of the ridiculous, others more moderate, have been offered and have been given their share of approval or condemnation.

"Some comrades say a communist should not have a house of his own, nor a bicycle, nor two suits of clothes," wrote one, "but are we an order of begging friars, or monks, who believe in having nothing? We aren't fighting for a condition in which every one shall be poor. Our aim is to make life better for every one, not worse. If a man has two suits of clothes and can change into clean clothes after work, so much the better." That this point of view is shared by other Communists I learned from my own experience. Returning to New York after having given most of my clothes away in Russia, I bought on Fifth Avenue a fur-trimmed coat. A young Russian engineer out of the Soviet Union for the first time in his life called next day and I appeared in my new coat with some misgivings. "I suppose you think it dreadful of me to buy a coat like this," I deprecated. "Of course not," he said. "Why should I? It looks very nice. You don't understand. We don't want our people to do without such things. We want everyone to be able to have coats like that."

In the discussions as to how communists should live the question of servants arose. "Communists should not be allowed to keep servants," fired one little red-headed man at a conference. "Why not?" asked others. "Those who need them to be free to do other work should have them. It's how they are treated that counts." Yaroslavsky, head of the Central Control Commission, approved this position, somewhat impatiently. "People shouldn't come running to the Control Commission with every such inquiry," he wrote. "If the servant has the same rights as the family, is paid a salary, and is a member of the collective, that's all there is to it." As a matter of fact servants are already very aware of their rights. One working in the house of a German friend of mine refused to wear an apron when guests came. "No," she said, "aprons were the mark of our servility in the Czar's time, and now I am a free *rabotnitsa* [woman worker]. I refuse to wear an apron."

It has also been suggested that Communists should be paid less than other workers. The Party maximum is actually less³ than the wage of some workers, but not from principle. Some Communists wanted it so from principle, but this suggestion was rejected as "constituting Communists a class apart, like crusaders or missionaries." "We mustn't do that," a Young Communist explained to me. "That would mean we differentiate Party members from the mass, and that would be quite against our principles." To separate oneself from the mass in Russia is a regression to bourgeoisdom. It is unproletarian, unethical. Precisely those who lead the masses must remain in close and constant touch with them, whether such leaders be engineers, Red Army men, artists, or philosophers. The leader gets his inspiration, strength, and support from the masses; to lose touch with them not only may delude him into the idea that he is superior, but it will also make him lose that freshness and virility that "only the new young rising class can give." He will cut himself off from the very source that provides him with qualities he needs as a leader.

"Just for a handful of silver he left us . . ." Always the masses have suffered from the "Lost Leader," the man who went back on his ideals and loyalties, whose "career" ruined him as a mass leader. To make a career has become a necessity and a praiseworthy ambition in Western society. In the Soviet Union it's not done. The Russian who wants to be well thought of by his fellows does not further his private ambitions; but not because he's made of different clay than other people. Wealth, title, social position, are not a measure of worth or standing. A man may work just as hard at some job, and do just as well, as the man in another country who is furthering his own career. In Russia the object will not be the achieving of personal fame, wealth, or high position; it will be, consciously, to serve society. An American engineer was talking to a Russian engineer who had perfected a device for getting oil out of the ocean.

"What do you get for that?" the American asked.

³ Since this was written it has been raised from 300 roubles to 750 roubles monthly, but other wages have risen also.

"Get? I get the oil out of the sea," said the Russian.

The same discovery would benefit the national economy of any other country as much as it does the Russian. But the average individual on the job in another society would not consciously regard this as his main objective, and he would expect more than the joy of having served his country for a reward even if he individually would benefit from the increased welfare of all. Money prizes and privileges are given inventors in the Soviet Union also, but frequently such prizes are returned to the state.

The Russian, working along like this, may wake up one day to find he has "made a career." He may be well known, admired, respected. The country may bestow on him the Order of Lenin. But he will go on with his work. Not to work in Russia (and it might be possible for some writers, artists, inventors, movie directors, and scenarists to retire on their earnings) is shameful.

In European society it has been the mark of the society man to do nothing. The position is reversed in the USSR. "Make a success." . . . "Make a name for yourself." . . . "Make your pile first and then serve your country if you want to"—these are admonitions one will not hear in the Soviet Union. We may speak with admiration of the man who serves society first, but society does not give him its highest material rewards. We admire men who spurn those rewards: the Pasteurs, Ecksteins, Einsteins, Lindberghs. We regard it as a moral achievement to care nothing for material gains in a civilisation in which these have become one of the main standards of merit. Our ethical ideals for the individual are contradicted by our social standards.

In the Soviet Union the ideals of the individual are being made the ideals of society; there are few groups with antagonistic and irreconcilable purposes. The Western conflict between the ego and society is vanishing. "One for all and all for one" is a purpose lived by many communists in their daily lives, not as an ideal difficult to achieve, but naturally, almost unconsciously, because the new society is so organised that a single, united, social purpose can be achieved by the individual effort of each.

As unpermissible as holding some of our business and professional ethics, or as the bad taste of displaying material possessions when others haven't enough, is the bad taste of holding certain attitudes. Certain ideas regarded as 100 per cent patriotism by some citizens of Western countries are unacceptable to Soviet citizens. Nationalism, for instance. To be unsympathetic to the workers and farmers of another country or race, Chinese, Hindu, British, Italian, would be to show oneself uneducated, ignorant, not a gentleman. To consider coloured races inferior would be a social blunder in the USSR. Communists are committed to the abolition of exploitation, and it has become essentially *herzensungebildet* to be a snob. You have to be generous-hearted to be a good Soviet citizen.

"Do you mean to say there are people in America who will not let their children play with Negro children?" a young girl asked me in shocked amazement. "I hear there are special trains and special hotels and restaurants for black people, that in some places they may not travel in cars or even eat with white Americans. That can't be true?"

"Why?" another young Communist girl asked, "why are these discriminations made? Of course it must be economic. The same discriminations are not made against rich Negroes, are they?" And when she was told, yes, some of the same discriminations applied to well-off Negroes, she begged: "But please explain it to me. You Americans are human beings as we are. What is the cause of this? Are your black human beings not human also?" The phrase "race prejudice" meant nothing to this girl. She did not understand it. There are some seventy races within the borders of the Soviet Union, many that speak no word of Russian, races that have no knowledge of modern civilisation, that live unkempt, superstitious, almost brutish in their primitiveness. "But we have no such feelings about them! We are sorry for them and we send out medical units and schools to teach them hygiene and give them some of the culture we enjoy. Do you in America then not wish your Negroes to be healthy and well educated, to have the same opportunities as you white people have?"

There are other race prejudices one does not entertain in the Soviet Union. It is not done to be anti-Semitic. And that is surprising for Russia. It is occasionally asserted that "of course, when Trotsky and Karl Marx and some other communist leaders were Jews, communism will not brook anti-Semitism." Deep and age-old racial prejudice is not so easily removed, and the prejudice in Russia was widespread. Pogroms were common and approved pastimes in Czarist society.

To-day it is not only a violation of the legal code, it is a token of ill-breeding to express anti-Semitism. When such an expression does occur among Communists, it is passed over as a *faux pas*. "Jew-baiting" is a punishable offence. Some peasants who beat a Jew in their village were sent to jail for three years. A man was imprisoned for making an anti-Semitic joke. A Party member may be purged out of the Party for anti-Semitic conduct. And the younger generation is growing up without the prejudice.⁴

Fewer non-Communists are imbued with the new attitude. Their behaviour is a measure of how far Communists have travelled. A girl to whom I gave the name of a doctor whom we were to visit remarked with a shrug: "That's a Jewish name, isn't it?" Arrested by the remark I wondered why it seemed unfamiliar; in another country it would have passed by unnoticed. Then I realised that I had not heard Jews referred to in that manner in the four months I had been in the country.

No society has heretofore attempted to create its morality consciously. The factors that go to make up the general feeling of what is and what is not "done" are, as has been said, subtle, and half or wholly unconscious. The Soviets are still shaping and stating some moral rules. And these are emphasised by the existence of a body which watches over these rules of conduct and punishes infringements of them.

The Central Control Commission exists to inquire into the behaviour of Communists, to chastise and "purge out of the Party" those who do not live up to Party discipline in their

⁴ How this radical change was achieved will be described in Chapter XVIII.

personal behaviour or political ideas. "A party becomes stronger by purging itself," Lassalle wrote to Marx in 1852. These chistkas or Party cleansings are strict and solemn proceedings. Bands of Communists,⁵ Comsomols, and even Pioneers⁶ swoop down on offices, clubs, factories, and farms, investigate behaviour and try culprits. A wife may state that her husband beats her, that he drinks, is lazy, or behaves like a hooligan. Charges of bureaucracy, administrative inefficiency, autocracy, may be brought against individuals or groups. Complaints are heard and the charges thoroughly investigated. Usually the Party cell⁶ has already been watching the accused. I asked a member of the Control Commission if the road was not left open to many abuses, that charges might be brought out of personal spite or jealousy. He answered shortly, "We control."

Hundreds of thousands of Communists have been cleaned out of the Party every year; hundreds of thousands, probably millions, more do not join because they know Party discipline will be too strict for them. They are not yet ready to "deny themselves daily" and follow Party orders. One girl told me that she was more than a sympathiser, she really was ready to join the Party, but she had a child of four and could not risk being sent far from home, as she might be, to do Party work.

Krupskaya, as was stated earlier, asked that general principles of conduct be laid down. In 1924 the Party conference, after long deliberation, agreed that no one code of behaviour for the new man could be settled on, not even an unwritten one, but certain general principles could be stated. I called on Emelyan Yaroslavsky, whose work it is to clarify and explain these principles, and communist ethics. He is a member of the Central Control Commission, secretary of the Party Collegium, president of the Society for the Militant Godless, and author of many books and pamphlets on communist ethics and morals. He is an Old Bolshevik, and a member of the Politburo.⁶

⁵ See footnote 1, page 15.

⁶ Political Bureau—the highest political body in the Communist party, which formulates policy.

As I stepped into Yaroslavsky's office, I was greeted by a big man with a large heavy face, a tousled bush of long grey hair, a heavy moustache, and sharp blue eyes. Curiously contradictory were two dimples, graceful and rather small hands, and a gentle voice. Yaroslavsky is the embodiment of the Bolshevik ideal—a combination of strength and gentleness. He was dressed in a navy-blue flannel Russian blouse, blue knee breeches, and high black Russian boots. Of the silver sailor's buttons on his cuffs one was missing.

Soviet officials are busy men, so I lost no time starting on my inquiry. "Does communism take over any of our moral ideas, or does the proletariat have special morals? Do communists in practice believe there are 'eternal moral truths' for all?"

Yaroslavsky looked up from his plain desk, the top of which was covered with red baize, serious and unsmiling. "Each class in society works out its own norms of behaviour. We communists don't believe eternal moral truths exist. Bourgeois morals are expressed in the laws of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat will have its own morality, which will arise out of its own life. The morals that have existed in the past have always been class-morals." Yaroslavsky pointed out that these ideas had been formulated by Marx and Lenin.

"I can give you an example. The bourgeois family is first and foremost an economic unit that was forced on the lower classes. Now that class, free to work out its own institutions, may arrive at some quite other form. But we still have the old form of family because in spite of all our social transformations the dead still clings to the living. The old social order is dead but some of the social institutions which it developed are harder to abolish. One of our troubles is that none of our new forms are pure; they are only transition forms. We have no communism yet."

"But are you consciously building a new ethics? An ethics for the communist culture?" I asked. "Or are you just allowing it to develop as it will? Many of our Western moral laws are still based on the traditions and the taboos of savage life. We have not altered them to conform with 'progress,'

with our discoveries about human nature. Do you consciously alter outworn taboos?"

"To a large extent our morals must grow out of the way of life,⁷ of course," he answered, "but we can and do consciously direct also. We have a few very simple principles. The class struggle has always to be borne in mind; that is the chief point in our culture. If every person were aware that for him the interests of Party, of class, stand above all else, there would be no need to work out special communist ethics, because all communist ethics would be included in this. But this knowledge has not yet entered profoundly into every one of us. However, we do not try to legislate our people into good behaviour; we do not try to pass one moral law for all our people. We say you can't make one moral law for one hundred and sixty million people; their lives are too different. Our Asiatic peoples, for instance, cannot be treated the same way as Europeans; their customs are not the same. How could we have one written law for all these people?"

When it comes to the ethics of the relationships between men and women, Communists know no more what is universally right and ethical than do the citizens of other societies. They know more definitely what they do not want than what they want—what is not done than what is done. In the economic sphere their doctrine is clear and unequivocal; in morals general statements are more difficult to formulate positively. And Communist attitudes to morals have changed in the different periods through which the Soviet Union has passed.

A few principles, however, have always been clear. One must not measure moral behaviour by the standards of abstract right and wrong, abstract justice, outworn moral or church laws. Morals must grow out of usage.

Some foreign observers have claimed that communists want to destroy morals, that communism is an amoral or antimoral movement. Immoralities have been attributed to the Bolsheviks, from the charge made in the early days of

⁷ *Byit*, a word one sees and hears constantly, means the new order, the new way of life.

the Revolution that all women had been nationalised to one recently made to the writer by a New York editor, that "of course prostitution can be abolished in a country in which all women live in a state of legalised prostitution." There might be some reason for the charge that communists deny morality—morality in its accepted everyday sense in capitalist societies.

In a famous speech at the Third All-Union Congress of the League of Communist Youth (1920), Lenin asked :

In what sense do we deny morality, morals ?

We deny the morals preached by the bourgeoisie, they who deduced their morality from God. We don't believe in God, and we are quite aware that the clergy, the landlords, the bourgeoisie, spoke in the name of God in order to get done what was to their own interests. Or if they didn't deduce their morals from the commands of God, then they got them from idealistic or semi-idealistic phrases that resemble the commands of a deity.

We deny all morality that is taken from non-human, non-class notions. Such ideas we consider deceitful ; we affirm they are put forward to corrupt the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

Lenin and Soviet writers since have taken the stand that there are no " absolute " or permanent morals independent of human society ; communist morality must arise out of the interests of the class struggle. " Morality is that which helps the destruction of the old exploiters' society and the unity of the workers who are building a new communist society."

Yaroslavsky stressed this point again and again. " One danger in teaching the new ethics," he said, " is that in the guise of communist ethics we offer over again only the old priests' morality. It is hard for us to break from it, for so many of our peasants and workers were brought up under it." In illustration he told the story of a local Communist organisation that expelled a woman from the Party for prostitution because she had had relations with two men. It was discovered that she had been a Partisan (Communist fighting sympathiser) on Kolchak's front, living among soldiers as the only woman ; " so it was possible to forgive

her," said the local organisation. " This phrase sounds too much like the old Church morality," Yaroslavsky censured.

Soviet writers of various groups have attempted to describe the new morality in operation. One of the best-known of these stories translated into English is Boris Pilnyak's " The Law of the Wolf," which tells of a husband whose wife and best friend have been carrying on a clandestine affair. The story takes place in the early days of the Soviet régime when amidst the strain of laying a new order the first attempts were made to formulate a new morality. In this story the husband tries to carry out what he considers his new duty as a communist. " We are building a new world and new morals," he says. " I do not consider polygamy Communist morals, but I consider it the duty of a Communist to be honest in his dealings with Communists. . . . I propose that you two marry without any unnecessary lies. I insist on this as the natural outcome of things." Later when a friend rings him up on the telephone he says : " To-day I sent my wife to her real husband. . . . I consider this . . . the duty of a Communist. I helped my friend. It was hard for him." The friend, Edgar, who had a wife and daughter of his own whom he dearly loved, and had regarded Maria merely as a pleasant passing affair, had neither intention nor desire to marry her. But Felix's attitude forces him to do so. He, Edgar, is also a communist ; he also must protect the new order of communist morals.

The author of this story is a poputchik or fellow traveller, not a Communist, a writer influenced by some of the old class-psychology, who sympathises with the Soviet régime but does not always understand it. Communists, however, rejected Pilnyak's story, claiming it was not a fair picture of the new ethics.

Old moral considerations, even if in a new guise, occasionally still bother communists. I have heard criticism and condemnation of the behaviour of others on what sounded very like the old moral grounds. Old attitudes are but to be expected among some people in this vast population. It is interesting to see them side by side with the fresh, frank, open weighing of the new pros and cons. Bitter conflicts are

caused by the clash of the old and new attitudes ; an orthodox Mohammedan father may still kill his daughter for marrying without his consent ; Comsomols in the city may "register" without even informing their parents. And meanwhile every effort is made by conscious and responsible Communists to eradicate the bourgeois outworn attitudes.

"Moral" misbehaviour in the old sense, our Western sense, is only misbehaviour under certain well-defined conditions in Russia to-day. The guiding consideration is : Does the citizen's private behaviour interfere with his or another person's work ? If not, private behaviour is not a matter for interference.

A school teacher who lived with her husband in Leningrad was called away to teach a village school in a far-away district. Both were Party members. After six months her husband became impatient, wired her to come back, look after his house, be his wife. She replied that there were no teachers in this village, there was an immense amount of work to be done, she was needed in the cultural work of the Five Year Plan. The husband wired once more : "You must choose between me and the Five Year Plan." The teacher chose and returned to her husband. (This was a case reported in a Soviet newspaper.) I asked a Communist official about this case. Should the woman have gone home or stayed ?

"She was a bad Party member," he answered. "Party and social work must come first, before the claims of family. In the old days when we were struggling for freedom, Revolutionaries went to jail and exile for long years, and people did not stop to ask then whether they were leaving wife and children."

Another Communist analysed the incident differently. "The Party could have arranged to send some other teacher to that village," he said. "There were plenty of jobs in Leningrad the woman could have done without leaving her husband. Stupidities in administrative detail are hardly a fair test of our new ethics."

Minute inquiries into the private lives of Communists are frowned on now. Yaroslavsky admitted that some Communists overreached themselves in "moral zeal" based on a

misunderstanding of Party principles, and that they must be set right with Bolshevik directness. He wrote a stinging article in the magazine *Bolshevik*⁸ :

I most emphatically condemn the Central Control Commission's rummaging into the private lives of Communists. We have already spoken and written a great deal about this, but still there are many cases in which Party organisations continue such goings-on. It is easier to sit and criticise others than to carry out real communist policy, rise to the occasion of the real tasks of our time.

He tells about a certain kolhoz (collective farm) school which took into account the moral behaviour of its students before granting certificates of graduation.

The Party cell examined whether a boy and girl had been more intimate than was permissible. Some comrades had to bring proofs and file statements that there was nothing between them but comradesly relationships. . . . Why should this be necessary ? Do our Party cells and our Central Control Commission exist for nothing better than to snoop around and find out how far men and women go in their private relationships ? . . . Questions of private life should not be considered the most important.

He takes up the case of a woman who had long been a Party member, quoting in full a letter in which she complains venomously about the behaviour of her husband. The letter says :

I am very interested in the question as to where the present life of Communists is leading and what the attitude of a Party woman should be. As far as facts go Communists to-day are not creating a communist family but rather a capitalistic family. I've had many talks with women Communists, and they're all complaining that their Communist husbands behave scandalously. They have other wives secretly, they abandon these wives with children and go and live with other women. . . . I lived with a Party member, I loved him sincerely, but he started a relation with another woman. And in addition to me and my son he has still another woman and a son by her. So altogether he has three *de facto* wives. So I left my husband, and tried to find a member of the Party who would be able

⁸ July, 1931.

to influence him. But to no avail. My son asks daily for his father while his father has now found a fourth wife. Tell me, how can I work? My health is injured, my youth destroyed.

I tell all this because there are many in my shoes, yet the Party doesn't care. . . . The Communists are being corrupted. A few days ago a woman Communist told me she would leave the Party if they didn't take up her problems. I agreed with her, yes, leave the Party. When you come to the Central Control Commission and tell them about a Party member's bad behaviour they ask you: "Are you a Communist?" "Yes, I am." "Then don't live with him." That is their only answer. Is that a way out? So I say, best save your health for your children, and leave the Party.

Yaroslavsky answers:

All right, let her go and save her health. . . . I wrote her that we don't join the Party to have our husbands or wives act decently toward us, but to fight for socialism. It is not a Bolshevik attitude to put private life so much in the foreground. Our Party must concern itself with problems of industrialisation, collectivisation, with the radical socialist reconstruction of the country, not with petty private matters.

Of course, this doesn't mean we may ignore moral corruption in individual members of the Party, ignore unpermissible behaviour toward a woman or children. As always, we will punish a Communist who behaves in a non-Communist manner in these matters, who does not shoulder responsibility for his children. . . . He must do his share.

Yaroslavsky assured me that he had always taken and still took the point of view expressed in this article. "We should cease criticising negatively. We don't want always to be saying, 'What does so and so do badly?' we should ask, 'What does he do well?'" It is the Party member's work that counts." And in vivid Bolshevik language he added: "We don't want to be for ever looking under the bedsheets."

Matters are included in Party ethics in Russia that we should hardly consider ethical questions. Chapter headings of Yaroslavsky's book *Party Ethics*, published in 1924 and so far not translated into English, will illustrate this: Is

there such a Thing as Classless or Superclass Morality? The Dead Takes Hold of the Living; Eternal Truths, Eternal Moral Values; What Do We Mean by Way of Life? What Must the Working Class Do in Order to Build a Communist Way of Life? The Housing Question; The Sex Question; The Church and Woman; The Family; How Should a Proletarian Arrange His Family and Sexual Relations? What Should Be His Guide? Asceticism and Sexual Looseness; Utopian Plans; Religion; Equality of Communist Labour; Hooliganism; Alcoholism; Boasting and Specialist-Baiting; Character of the Future Proletarian Morality. A few of these subjects are dealt with in detail in this volume.

How about alcoholism, for example? One of the rules of the League of Communist Youth is that Comsomols shall neither drink, smoke, nor take drugs. Young Communists do not go about with hip flasks nor take cases of vodka along on parties. A Communist may be turned out of the Party if he is found drinking so much that it interferes with his work or sets a bad example. Alcoholism is not objected to merely because it impairs health and unfits a man for work, but also because it is one of those "remnants of the old." Friedrich Engels wrote that "workers drink as a result of moral and physical conditions. The responsibility for this must be borne by those who have reduced the worker to the status of a lifeless creature." It is capitalistic exploitation that forced workers to drink, and since "we in the USSR no longer live under the conditions that lead to alcoholism in other countries, we must wipe out this heavy heritage of the past." Culture has not kept pace with economic growth, socialist culture has not yet completely permeated the population; that is why even young people can still be found who drink. These are the explanations constantly heard.

Detailed questionnaires have been sent out to find how much drinking there still is, and why. One sheaf of answers indicated that the family was to blame; the young people felt unhappy at home because their parents were not Communists and disapproved of their children's championing the new cause. Others stated that they drank most in company.

Nicolay Krylenko, now Commissar of Justice, finds another cause :

Youths between the ages of twelve and thirteen have lived through the worst years of economic chaos. And at the time when they ought to have been getting the best cultural and political influences they were met instead by our worst years of chaos, 1919-22, when we had neither strength, time, people, nor money to put into education and culture. The young people of this group received only one legacy from the Revolution—the destructive instinct. . . . None was there at that time to give them the constructive energy they should have got.

Direct connection between the length of the working day and the degree of drunkenness ("proving" that it was exploitation under the old system that caused alcoholism in workingmen) is adduced by figures : In 1909 among St. Petersburg workers 33 per cent of those who worked nine hours a day were drunkards, while of those that worked ten hours 67 per cent drank to excess. These figures, it is stated, bear out Engel's theory.

Whatever explanations are advanced for drunkenness—and that much still occurs no one in or out of the USSR will deny—there is no compromise in Soviet ideas on this subject. "The Proletarian Revolution and the plan of socialist reconstruction ought to bring about the complete 'liquidation' of alcohol. The Soviet Government has adopted a policy of sobriety."⁹ And propaganda, intense, unceasing, unbridled, is carried on against it, everywhere, at all times, by all the human ingenuity that can be called into play.

The drunkard is no longer admired in Russia. Contests to see who can "hold the most" are no longer so popular. The drunk sprawling across the city street is passed unnoticed or given a contemptuous glance by the hurrying crowd. "If he wants to indulge in such unsocial behaviour he can hardly expect society to look after him," exclaimed an indignant Comsomol in answer to my remonstrance. Her tone and glance were enough to show the unfashionableness of alcoholism among the Communist youth.

⁹ Emelyan Yaroslavsky, *Morals and Way of Life*, 1926. Not so far translated into English.

The good proletarian is not a rowdy, a hooligan. Hooliganism may be anything from rape or sabotage to breaking windows in the street, cursing, getting drunk and disorderly, staying away from work the day after payday. The chapter in Yaroslavsky's *Morals and Way of Life* dealing with this branch of conduct says :

Hooliganism under the Czar could be said to be due to the oppressive conditions under which people lived, but since these have been abolished some other reason must be found for it. The youth of the villages are not sufficiently educated, they do not understand sufficiently the interests of the class that is forging ahead—the labouring class. Such behaviour is proof of individualism and shows its perpetrators are *déclassés*. . . .

A correspondent from Ivanovno Vosnessensk says hooliganism has appeared there in dangerous form. Hooligans terrorise women and girls, lying in wait for them as they go to and from work. . . . They have appeared in club and theatre and even at social meetings. And in the factory. . . . One day a factory had to stop work ; something had gone wrong. It was discovered that some one had put nails into the turbine.

All this might have been called "counter-Revolutionary" and the "highest measure of social defence" (death by shooting) have been employed to curb it. And in fact a few years later many such acts were made criminal offences. But in 1926 they were still only hooliganism. Disapproval of such conduct, however, was strong.

The Russian vocabulary of swear words must be one of the richest in the world. It is to be cut down. Bad language is "an old Russian failing that the new citizen must not indulge in." A notice pinned on the wharf at Samara ran :

Do not throw rubbish about, do not strike a match near the oil pumps, do not spit sunflower seeds, and do not swear or use bad language.

It is commonly believed that the melancholy temperament of the Russian intellectuals was frequently the cause of suicide, but neither the tradition nor this supposed tendency is considered an excuse by communists in justification of or excuse for suicide to-day. Whether it is permissible for a Bolshevik to commit suicide is a question that has agitated

communists considerably. Some of the valued soldiers of the Revolution have taken their own lives. The anxiety and stress of even everyday life overwhelms many ; and difficult readjustments are demanded by the sharp reversals of government policy, reversals at first inexplicable to the more naïve. Suicide has seemed to them the only way out.

Two of Russia's finest modern poets, Mayakovsky and the gifted peasant poet Sergei Yessenin, killed themselves. There have been many explanations.

Intellectuals like Trotsky and Boris Pilnyak explained the suicide of Yessenin on the grounds that he was a lyric poet in an anything but lyrical age, and others gave the same explanation for Mayakovsky's end. Communists, however, in conformity with their social approach to all questions, gave different reasons. Yessenin, they pointed out, was a village boy hurled from the backwardness of the village into the greatest Revolution in human history. He was unable to adjust to the change. He could accept neither the socialist Revolution nor machines. One of his most beautiful poems describes the agony of his own soul in the new industrial world. A little foal is running along the railway tracks ; he hears the train behind him and begins to run down the tracks—a race the poet realises is hopeless. The foal is crushed beneath the wheels of the locomotive—a symbol of Yessenin's destiny. Yessenin accepted the Soviet régime because it freed and gave land to the peasant class from which he sprang, but that was as far as he would go. Socialism was too much for him. In another poem he says plaintively that he has tried to read Marx in vain. Unable to adapt himself to the new world, Yessenin took refuge in Bohemia, seeking forgetfulness in drinking and sexual excesses.

Mayakovsky's suicide was also attributed by communists to social maladjustment. This poet was city born and bred and began his career in that Bohemia in which Yessenin ended his. He embraced the Revolution at the very beginning and became for a time its outstanding poet, as long as it was in its stormy and destructive phase. When the era of peaceful construction came he found that his muse could

not step down from the "taking of the Winter Palace to thirty-two kopecks for a yard of muslin." He tried his hand at plays, which failed, and felt himself outstripped by a generation of writers better adjusted to the world about him.

During the NEP period loyal and convinced communists killed themselves rather than live through what they thought an "unbearable betrayal of the Revolution." For many erroneously believed NEP was a return of capitalism.

The Party has given the question of these "political" suicides deep and careful consideration ; its attitude is now unequivocal. "Though not a crime, it is necessary strictly to condemn suicide," writes Yaroslavsky. "Only tired or weak people seek this way out. True, no general opinion will fit every one's case ; each case must be analysed individually ; but we cannot consider suicide a way out. We cannot acquit the man who takes his own life." And again : "We must register a stern disapproval of suicide, then fewer people will take that way out. We should be attentive to the needs of people who find themselves in difficult situations, of course, but we must not acquit the weak nor praise them for their wrong step, a step that is harmful to communism."

This opinion has been reiterated in meetings and conferences, in books, in the Party journals ; again and again Yaroslavsky or another states it at a Party congress for young people, at an atheist meeting, in the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. No doubt can be left in the mind of the Soviet citizen that he has no right to take his own life.

Yaroslavsky's admonition that the party should be attentive to people in difficult situations is taken care of by the practice of mutual aid. The communist must be active, intelligent, responsible for his own conduct and behaviour. But true communists should also watch and help one another, especially in moral "tight places." Peasants just in from the village cannot be expected to understand proletarian discipline as well as factory workers ; it is the duty of those who know more about it to help them acquire such understanding. At the time of the NEP there was much backsliding ; comrades were tempted by the greater comforts and

case of life and numbers succumbed to old bad bourgeois habits. This was a time when stronger characters must support those with less backbone.

Where comrades are falling too much under the influence of the NEP environment, we must watch them, help them to get out of such environment. If the comrade is one whom it is possible and worth while to help we must remove him from danger, place him in another environment and give him other work, Party work for instance, which will keep him in constant touch with, and responsible to, the working mass.¹⁰

Party members feel protected by the Party to an astonishing extent. A young man who had been left an orphan early became a besprizorni¹¹ and roamed the country keeping himself alive by stealing. He was a savage, resentful of all restraint and authority, until he became a Red partisan and fought in the civil war. At the age of twenty-two he learned to read and went to a university. When I met him six years later, he was the head of a scientific institute in Leningrad, happy, well adjusted, hard-working, and devoted to the Revolution. "After 1917 I was no longer an orphan," he said, "The Soviets became my father, the Party is my mother."

"What are our ethics?" asked Arnold Soltz, one of the heads of the Central Control Commission, in a private conversation. "The new relationships of men create new morals, we to-day in our new society want men to live like brothers, to work like brothers. We work in order to better the life of man. Capitalists work to get private profit—that's why their life is meaningless. We work in order to create a new society. Each worker knows he's working for his own; he knows that the country, the factories, the farms, belong to him, that his good is the good of the whole and the good of the whole means his good."

¹⁰ Yaroslavsky, *Ibid.*

¹¹ Homeless waif (plural, besprizornie). The word literally means "without care." After the civil war some 2,000,000 were left without homes and roved the country, stealing to live, dying of cold, exposure, and starvation. By 1931 only 300,000 were left, who are now in special schools and farms. The Soviet talkie *Road to Life* is a good picture of these homeless children.

"Our collective is conscious. We are not like the ants, who also live together and work together. They are not conscious. Our work is based on socialist competition. In the capitalist world there is also competition, but that is different. They try to kill one another, drown one another, knock out their competitors; each man tries to get the upper hand, is out for himself. You speak much about co-operation, but in fact you compete and are glad when the other fellow is out of business. And look at what this competition results in! Your capitalists now have to burn their wheat, their cotton, their coffee. Our people also have not enough at present, but that is because we do not produce enough yet for both home consumption and export. We cannot give to every one as much as we would like, but we distribute to all. Under capitalism you do not."

"The highest ethics is that men should live like brothers. We are creating the economic foundations of a society in which that will be possible."

It must not be thought, however, that the Soviet system seeks to develop ascetics or robots; they do not want standardised human beings in a standardised world. Alexander Kozariov, secretary of the Young Communist League said at the Seventh All-Union Consomol Congress (1932):

Based on the new economic relations, we are forming a new morality, new ethics, new relations between people and society.

In bourgeois society every one lives for himself. The experience acquired during the fifteen years of Soviet power showed that an individual attains fullness of personality only when well-being is attained by millions collectively, under the leadership of the Party. Tens of millions of people who were subjected to suffering and privations in the past live now more culturally and happily.

It is primarily because we subject our individuality to the interest of the class that we enrich ourselves spiritually and in ideals. It is because of this that we are progressive people, foreign to bourgeois savagery. It is because of this that we are people worthy of our epoch.

For this reason we are not opposed to music, we are not opposed to love, we are not opposed to flowers or beautiful wearing apparel. We are not ascetics and do not preach asceticism. We are for a full, rich, beautiful life.

CHAPTER III

ONE OF FIVE MILLION

We have no communists yet. Maybe in a generation or two, or three, the system will have bred—a communist.
—LENIN.

"WHO WAS the most interesting person you met in Russia?" I was asked recently. It took me little time to decide:

"Sergei Davidovitch."

Sergei was a twenty-two-year-old Communist, slim and blue-eyed, with Slavic high cheekbones and blond hair. He had graduated from the League of Communist Youth to the Party some years before. His father had been an old revolutionary, his mother a doctor; both had died in the civil war. The little Seryozha was brought up in one of the Children's Homes run by Narcompros,¹ the People's Commissariat of Education.

He was already the typical "new man." A convinced Marxist, he was no narrow-minded doctrinaire. Intelligent, thoughtful, well read—in poetry and the classics as well as in political writings—he thought about Soviet problems for himself and came to his own conclusions.

Sergei had already been "up against it." He had lived through as much in his few years as many people do in decades. A brilliant student, he had been torn away from his studies at the First Moscow University to take part in the first great drive for collectivisation (1929); had had to pacify peasants goaded to animal fury by government confiscation of their produce. Few hard-boiled captains of

¹ *Nar* stands for *narodny*, People's; *com*, for Commissariat. All departments on ministries of the Soviet Government are People's Commissariats.

industry, in a lifetime of dealing with men, meet some situations this not very robust boy had already mastered. For years he did not move without his revolver; and one felt it would not have troubled him much to have to use it.

But Sergei never bragged, never talked of these experiences. I had to drag them from him as one had to drag accounts of the World War from returned soldiers. They were in the day's work, as much a matter of course as writing a report for the Party Committee. The play *Bread (Chleb)*, which has run several years in Moscow, deals with the drama in the collectivisation of peasants, shows their sullen fury as they attempt to assassinate the Bolshevik grain-collectors. "The play shows things as they were," Sergei said simply when I asked him about it; he did not enter on any further discussion.

This young Communist lived alone in the usual small bare room in an apartment with four other families. His morning tea he boiled in the common kitchen, his other meals he took out, perhaps with friends. Once when he was ill and I called with some grapes and a tin of American soup, I found him alone with a hunk of black bread and some evil-looking meat; it had been his only food all day. Though it was October and the city heat had not yet been turned on, there were no sheets or woollen blankets on the bed. Sergei possessed none. He covered himself with his threadbare overcoat and an old horse blanket.

In the room were a couple of shelves and a wooden table stacked with piles of paper-covered books; nothing else. No rug, carpet, pictures; the only decoration was the peeling paint. But it was home to Sergei, and he loved it. "I like to wake in the morning in my own little room," he said once, "look out of my own little window, sit at my table with my own books around me. . . ." He did not miss the comforts he lacked.

He dressed as simply as he lived, always in the same shiny blue serge suit—he had no other—frayed at sleeve and trouser ends; the same tie, shoes, cap, and coat. When his friend Alexandra Mikhailovna (we called her Shura for short) and I went to the special shop to which I had access

to buy him shirts and underwear, he would barely give us his cross attention to decide on colours and sizes. "What do I want with that truck?" he asked impatiently.

"Are you happy?" I asked Sergei once.

"Happy? I don't know. I've never thought about it."

In the Soviet Union it is not a question of contentment or discontent, of happiness or unhappiness, of hunger or the satisfaction of appetites. Is a woman happy when she is giving birth to a longed-for child? They are bringing to birth a new world with a new *Weltanschauung*, and in the process questions of personal contentment become secondary.

Whenever he came to my room, Sergei would have a sheaf of papers under his arm, and would read me the news that sounded so like communiqués during the World War. Politics in the daily government newspapers *Pravda*² and *Izvestia* (*News*); flashes from the economic front in *Za Industrialisatziu* (*Toward Industrialisation*) and *Ekonomicheskaya Jizn* (*Economic Life*); reports of the last light-cavalry attacks on the chemical front or storming of narrow places in the small-tools campaign from *Technika* (*Technique*), a new daily started that summer. He read also the political and literary weeklies and monthlies: *Novy Mir* (*New World*), *Bolshevik*, *Krasnaya Nov* (*Red Virgin Soil*). He knew the political history, policies, and latest pronouncements of every Bolshevik statesman as a movie fan knows the published lives and loves of her movie favourites in America. Dropping in as Shura and I sat at supper, he would first give her in rapid Russian a résumé of the day's manoeuvres, then more slowly explain to me the news in its context.

"A good piece by Karla to-day" (the affectionate name given Karl Radek, editor of *Izvestia*), Sergei would start, or, "Litvinov spoke well on his mission to Turkey." The mutiny in the British fleet, the latest moves of Hitler, the possibilities of a Fascist régime in Chile, the course of the depression in America—all were read and discussed with devouring intensity. When the sugar scandal broke Sergei

² *Pravda* means *Truth*. This title has been used from the beginning of the Revolution for the official newspaper organs of the Communist party, the League of Communist Youth, and the Pioneers.

telephoned his friends every few hours for the latest news, not from a mere gossip interest but with a serious eagerness to know the developments. To have corruption creeping into the Five Year Plan now, that could not be tolerated.

These matters were no abstract interest in economics to Sergei. They were life itself. The newspaper articles and editorials would lead to long discussions and arguments on questions of immediate Soviet policy or the philosophy back of it. "Why the pace?" I began one evening. "Why this terrific tempo? Suppose it does take you twenty years to industrialise your country instead of five? It took other countries fifty or a hundred. History has time."

"That's one of our most important questions, involving the principles underlying our whole task," Sergei answered. "You must understand it." He smiled. "You're a left deviationist,³ I can see, but the question should be discussed." And for an hour he explained, carefully, patiently, drawing on a historical and a political knowledge that astonished me. Few young people elsewhere are so informed.

The definition of a Babbitt was once given as a man who does not see the connection between any two things. Communists are intellectually not Babbitts.

Though his days were full, Sergei gave no sense of nervous hurry or strain; rather of poise, and quiet, controlled strength. The major problems of life, problems that torture many people for years, were for him settled: the meaning and purpose of life; his ideals; his "work"; what was to take first place and what second. These things were just naturally known. Sergei had just finished building a factory near Moscow and was out of work. That did not worry him. He would be assigned to his next job as surely as he had been given his last and would be given the one after the next. There was no need to be idle meanwhile. He had a stack of political books to review for a literary paper;

³ A deviation is a departure from the established line of the Party accepted by resolution of Party congresses. According to the kind of wrong ideology espoused one is a right deviationist, left deviationist, a right or left opportunist. In this Russian use the words "right" and "left" do not correspond, as is sometimes erroneously supposed, to "conservative" and "radical."

articles to write about the work in the factory ; books to read. Friends called him right and left to do this, help with that. He was out four nights out of five. Dancing, at parties, drinking ? By no means. One evening he had his political problems class for railroad men ; on another, a Party meeting (he was a member of the Moscow Soviet) ; on the third, a class of young Comsomols. Once every five days he travelled to his factory to see that everything there was running smoothly. On one occasion when some expected machinery had not arrived Sergei went out every day, the four-hour journey there and back, to see what makeshifts could be employed. The Red director and the workers had taken a fancy to him, and brought him many problems besides technical ones. One raw, slushy winter's night the men hid his overcoat and goloshes so that he could not go home. They thought it a great joke to keep him all night at the factory, talking.

Sergei admired the workers as much as they did him. "I really love the Russian working man," he burst out once. "I love his heroism, his self-sacrifice, his dauntless courage. Do you realise that these men stay there working voluntarily sometimes fifteen and sixteen hours a day, just to help achieve the Plan ? And we consider ourselves hardly used if we have to work more than eight."

He rarely got to bed before morning, Seryozha. Occasionally he did not sleep at all. Before the last important production conference of the Gosplan⁴ on which he was then working, he went four days and nights without sleeping, preparing reports. He did not even mention it afterwards. Does a soldier mention every time he is on patrol duty ?

Sergei did not dance—he did not know how—and he disliked most movies, but concerts and the theatre he enjoyed. When *Czar Peter I* was playing on the Moscow stage he re-read Tolstoy's novel and told us about it enthusiastically. He was a great patriot, and his blue eyes gleamed as he related stories of the great deeds of Russia, the wise achievements of Peter in modernising the country ; work that was

⁴ State Planning Commission. The word *gos* in Russian contracted names stands for *gosudarstvenny*, state.

bearing fruit now in leading peasants and workers to better lives.

Next to the World Revolution I think Sergei loved Russia ; but Russia meant for him her workers, the proletariat. Nobles, capitalists, landlords, priests, parasitical aristocrats, they were not Russia. Now they were gone and the real Russia was going to live again.

Like many young Communists, Sergei had a college boy's love of and loyal devotion to his friends. *Tovarishch*, Comrade, is pal as well as citizen. I once heard a Communist, the looks of whose new and very pretty "fiancée" some one was warmly admiring, answer simply : "*Ana horoshaya tovarishch*"—"She's a good comrade." This he repeated to any one who mentioned her looks. At a concert once Sergei introduced me to a bullet-headed young man in Red Army uniform, a friend he had not seen for years. "I love that man," he cried. "He killed many Whites during the civil war. What a comrade !" His admiration was not for the military hero only, but also for the friend who had exterminated their common enemies of freedom.

Seryozha's best friend, Sascha, had been abroad for a year and was expected home on leave. I happened to be at Shura's apartment the night the chum was expected. Sergei paced up and down the room, unable to sit down, unable to read or even drink tea. He launched into praise of his chum, then fell silent, then broke out again : "*Zamichatelnnye ! Zamichatelnnye !*"—"It's great ! It's great !" When Sascha at last arrived, the two boys embraced on both cheeks, held one another off, took a long look, embraced again. It looked more like a meeting between a long-parted mother and child than between two college chums. Then almost immediately they plunged into a discussion of conditions in England. "Extraordinarily difficult, our work over there," said Sascha. For the rest of the evening hardly a personal word was spoken ; socialism versus capitalism held the floor.

The contrast between the two boys' clothes ! Sascha in his warm English overcoat, thick-soled boots, clean tie and collar, looked like a prince. And he was clean-shaven—I

mean shaved clean. Sergei's shiny suit seemed more threadbare than ever by comparison ; there were now two irreplaceable buttons off the waistcoat, and the holes in his socks showed above his worn-down heels. His collar was frayed and soft bristles covered his chin, for in the good old Russian way he shaved but once every three or four days. But he seemed oblivious of the contrasts ; to envy his chum's clothes did not seem to enter his mind, any more than it entered Sascha's to notice his.

Sergei had many such friends. Any one of them could call on him for anything at any time. No effort was too great for him to make for a friend. He would walk for hours in the snow to give news of the latest political move, the latest government pronouncement. Boy or girl, man or woman, it was all the same. Sergei was not registered nor otherwise married. He spent much of his time with a girl chum. He fetched her from work every day, talked with her on the telephone several times a day, ate his meals with her, spent evenings in her room discussing. In the summer they lived at the same datcha (country cottage) with other friends. When it was very late after an evening with friends in her room and the trams had stopped, Sergei would remain overnight, spreading a Bokhara rug on the floor. He treated Shura and her friends just as he treated his men comrades.

Thus, though Sergei had no family of his own, he was not lonely. His friends filled its place. He showed me old photographs of his family once, recalling the members of it with deep affection and regret. Yet when we were discussing the case of the Leningrad sister and brother who had shot themselves rather than denounce their traitor father to the militia, and I asked Sergei if he could imagine denouncing his father in this way, he looked at me in astonishment. The blue of his eyes gleamed hard. "*Kanyeshna*"—"Of course," he said quietly. How could I ask ? A father was no different from any one else.

He had no religion, Seryozha. When I made allusions to biblical stories or characters, he looked blank. It is baffling, that look of the young Russian. "Wise as Solomon," you say. "Wise as who ?" they ask, uncomprehending. "Have

you never even read the Bible ?" I asked one. No, Sergei hadn't, as many other young Communists have not either ; it is no sign of a deficient education not to recognise these allusions, as it would be not to recognise an allusion to the writings of Marx or Lenin.

One day a party of us were going through a picture gallery in which some Italian primitives had been newly hung. At one picture of the risen Christ a young Communist wrinkled his nose : "I can't even look at it," he said. "He looks to me like a drunk—swaying there with those wings." He was being neither blasphemous nor aggressively irreverent ; he might have said that about any figure in any painting. The present generation in Russia has never had the feeling of respect for religion, not even the respect for other people's beliefs that even non-believers in other countries imbibe from the cradle.

Sergei is perhaps not a typical example of the youth of the new Russia ; he is possibly more thoughtful, not quite so carried away by unthinking enthusiasm ; and he can listen to other points of view without the hard antagonism of some Bolsheviks. But in his ideals and his feelings, his enthusiasm and his dislikes, he is the new Soviet citizen. Students used to live as Sergei lives ; to-day all young Communists have his lack of interest in material well-being. A young engineer crossed to the United States on my boat. He had never been out of Russia, had fought in the war and starved in the famine, and had lived in two tiny rooms in Leningrad. Yet on arriving in New York he hardly noticed the shops on Fifth Avenue ; he bought himself nothing but a slide rule for his work, although he had the money. And when I asked him whether he wasn't struck by seeing so many goods in the shop windows he seemed surprised at my question, but uninterested. "We'll have that one day, too," he said.

Rarely does one hear the young Communist discuss money matters, or regret that he is not paid more than he is. Never have I heard the phrase "I can't afford it" from their lips. Sergei was paid 300 roubles a month, the Communist maximum at that time ; he spent it like other young Communists,

on rent, food, fares, dues, an occasional theatre or concert. He had few of the budgetary problems of Western middle or upper class young men : Am I spending too much on this ? Shall I cut down on that ? Can I afford to trade in my car this year ? Shall I take to a cheaper brand of tobacco ? His life was simple and uncluttered. Most of his leisure was spent in pastimes that cost nothing. The tasks before the Union were his tasks. He often sighed as he saw groups of workmen idling, or ten men doing some job which three could have done, at the thought of how much was still to be done, at the queues before the shops, at the overcrowded tram-cars.

Not all the young people in the USSR have the disregard for material welfare that most young Communists show. Girls especially feel the lack of goods intensely. They want nice clothes, good cosmetics, silk stockings. They envy foreigners. Some have developed an almost pathological desire for the good-quality clothes they have so long been deprived of. I have had them feel feverishly my foreign clothes, hat, frock, sample the material, stroke the silk, almost pull my underwear from under my blouse in their frenzied hunger. Since the NEP period, good-quality material has hardly been known in the Soviet Union. One quite beautiful girl journalist on a Moscow paper told me she wept night after night yearning for the pretty things and easy life girls in other countries had.

But there is a chasm between a Party member or sympathiser and a bourgeois or "former" young person ; the non-Communist is easily recognised in Russia. "We can tell at a glance if they are ours or not," said Shura. Both types may like pretty clothes, silk stockings, and real lace on their underwear ; it is the relative importance these things have in their lives that is different. The girl in Kollontay's novel *Red Love* who drifted apart from her husband when he became acquisitive under the NEP régime was not exceptional. She felt uncomfortable, out of place, "betrayed" in fine surroundings ; it was a bother when her husband asked her to have a new dress made. For the bourgeois girl, the new ideas, the progress of the new state, the problems of socialism,

are not important. She is less interested in reading the newspapers, seems bored by parades, propaganda, Party slogans ; she takes less part in meetings. She envies foreigners who can travel, who possess material goods, look "genteel." She may work in a government office, but her work is only a job to be done because one must live. She does not link her own work and her personal life with the new ideals. "What can I get out of life for myself ; what will make me happy ?" is her attitude. She may even still feel in the old way about social classes. A girl of twenty-three whom I asked to help me iron a dress said contemptuously, nodding in the direction of the kitchen : "Why don't you get your servant to do it ?" It was the first time I had heard a servant referred to as "your servant" in that tone ; no Communist would think of doing it. The servant is a woman worker.

This girl was impressed by names of well-known men and women ; few Communists are impressed by any one. For the Communist, every one, commissar or bootblack, director or workman, is *tovarishch*, comrade. This is not a pose ; these young people do not feel that any one is better than they. Age particularly does not command respect. Communists are one united loyal band occupied in one task, in which the work of the coalheaver is as important as that of a great scientist or Stalin himself.

Between these two types of girls or young men, Soviet and former people, there is little friendship and less mixing. There are exceptions ; but as a general rule the bourgeois and the Communist in the Soviet Union belong to what an American has described as "two worlds that meet but do not mix."

Comsomols⁵ are the happiest of Russia's population to-day. They are society's élite. Too young to have taken part in the Revolution, they have not to face the disillusioning contrast between the romantic high-strung years of fighting and the, to some, duller years of peacetime building-up.

That contrast and the difficulty of becoming adjusted to it have been described in many stories of the new Russia.

⁵ See footnote 1, page 15.

Buzheninov, the hero of Alexei Tolstoy's *Azure Cities*, who fought in the civil war, can hardly bear it :

I have fallen from my horse into the mud of the roadway, the regiment has gone, I sit in the mud. . . . I don't want to live. . . . The hoofs of our horses beat no longer. The happy years have fled.

His friend answers him :

Your moods, Comrade Buzheninov, come under an old category of ours. When you are in the saddle, rifle in hand, and fire beyond the nearest mound, that hour of the Revolution is lived on nerves, on emotions, on enthusiasm. Gallop, cut, shout with full force, be romantic. The roan horse rears up and carries you away. But now harness that battle steed to the plough ; that's hard, there's no fight there, just everyday labour and sweat. . . .

It doesn't matter how disagreeable, dirty, or difficult a job, the Comsomol is ready for it. In the time of invasions and civil war, when volunteers were called upon to take propaganda into the enemy lines and it was known that to be caught meant death with torture, Comsomols volunteered. When personnel was needed to clean out a cholera-infested town, they could be called on. To be sure, as Tolstoy says, those were the romantic days. But the Comsomols of to-day show the same fire for the peace-time tasks, for " the everyday labour and sweat."

They carry out jobs with a gusto that amazes every one who sees it. In the summer of 1931 the cobbled square before the Grand Hotel needed paving. Moscow Comsomols did the job with a speed and abandon that kept American visitors staring. When no pickaxe was in sight girls and boys attacked the cobbles with bare hands. Every day in the Square of the Revolution, and later in Arbatsky Ploshad, where the big church had been torn down, I saw as much progress made as ordinary street labourers would have made in a week. The unskilled Comsomols seemed to turn energy into skill by sheer will-power and force of numbers. And one could see that to them the work was symbolic. They were building socialism with their own hands.

It is interesting to compare these young Bolsheviks of to-day with the Stari Bolsheviki, the Old Bolsheviks who broke the ground for the foundations of socialism. Hounded and exiled, they served years in chains. " Their biographies in the archives," says Vladimir Lidin, " would fill you with childlike awe." Krupskaya, in her *Memories of Lenin*, describes the dangers of conspiratorial underground work of professional revolutionaries before the Revolution.

These Old Bolsheviks are a distinct type in Russia to-day. Many of them are still under fifty, strong and full of energy. I met one on the boat coming over to America. Mikhail Ostrovich, grey-haired, soft-voiced, with deep-set blue eyes, was naïve to a point almost childish about some things. He was interested in everything about him, the passengers, the crew, the number of hours they worked, where they slept and ate, arrangements for their leisure. He asked to be taken over the boat, to see the different classes, the mechanical arrangements, the turbines and engines. He asked many questions in his soft voice. Once he picked up a small book of flat matches on each of which was stamped the name of our boat. He leaned over conspiratorially. " What a splendid idea!" he whispered eagerly. " I shall send some of these home. We should adopt this idea. Only we would not use them to advertise private boat companies. We would write on each match : ' Wash your hands before eating.' . . . ' Take a bath every day.' . . . ' Eat slowly.' . . . ' Keep your dining rooms neat.' We should manufacture and distribute such matches by the million. What an invaluable method of propaganda!" And, stealthily, he slipped the book of matches in his waistcoat pocket.

Though brought up on the doctrine of class hatred, Mikhail Ostrovich was gentle, kind, tolerant. He had none of the aggressive militancy of many Comsomols. Lady Astor on her visit to Russia noticed this lack of aggressiveness about an Old Bolshevik, a poet who had been imprisoned twelve years in the Fortress of Peter and Paul, and was later a member of a trade delegation and head of a Soviet publishing enterprise. " You don't hate!" she cried at him once.

"You wouldn't hurt a fly! You are more full of Christian love than any Christian I ever met!"

The Old Bolshevik, a member of the Society for the Militant Godless, was puzzled, as were many Russians at Lady Astor's remarks in the Soviet Union. But the foreigners around understood the contrast she was pointing out.

The Old Bolsheviks admire the happy and consciously achieving young people of to-day. For the youth of Russia is happy in knowing what it wants, and where it is going. It is with its world, does not have to fight it as did the Old Bolsheviks. Not for Comsomols the English postwar saying, "I don't know what I want, but I know I haven't got it." Nor the drinking, disillusioned lost generation of Ernest Hemingway's novels. "When I was a young man," said a Russian who had spent his youth in Russia, "and we took a girl out we would recite poetry under the moon, analyse the sickness in our souls, call man 'an ulcer in the beauty of nature.' To-day the young man tells his girl of the automobile he's making, explains the working of a tractor, invites her to his Party meeting to hear him talk on the Industrial-Financial Plan."

Young people function energetically, to use Boris Pilnyak's phrase. No introspective blues for the young man whom social work calls four nights out of five. Problems that harass young people of other countries do not obsess young Communists. "Shall I work to make money, or do what I want to do?" "Shall I be able to earn enough at my work to marry?" "If I specialise in law can I be honest?" "Is there any way I can combine my interest in writing with my interest in medicine?" "Will I get a job if I take up electrical engineering?"

Youth governs Russia, and consciously. In Russian factories the best workers are the young. Eighty per cent of the 11,000 workers in the Kharkov Tractor Factory are twenty-five years of age or under. In Stalingrad I saw a roomful of girl shock-brigaders, the pick of the plant, none over twenty-four.

The daily paper run by the League of Communist Youth, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, reflects youth's attitude of cocky

assurance. The language is definite, sharp; it lays down the law. These headings are taken out of one issue:

WE MUST HAVE BETTER LIBRARY INSPECTION

RAISE THE TEMPO AND QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP

WE MUST GET HOLD OF THE RIFLE AND THE TRACTOR

LACK OF SYSTEM IS THE SCOURGE OF INDUSTRY

ALL IS NOT WELL WITH ART

Shyness has disappeared as a quality in young people. I met a very pretty girl on the boat going down the Volga. Alla was seventeen, with bright eyes, red lips, and rosy cheeks, not made up; she was bursting with health and good spirits. She came, laughing, on the boat one evening, and by the next day had spoken to everybody, had discussed politics with them, knew their business, had told them what she was going to do. Men surrounded her, though she was not flirting. Her conversation was about serious matters. She had her own opinions, although she deferred to her mother, to whom she seemed deeply attached. She was studying to be a radio engineer, and for her social work was teaching the backward population of Saratov the elements of hygiene and literacy. There was plenty to do, for in that German Volga region there is a plague of trachoma. Peasant families wash their faces in the same basin and catch the germs from one another. It was not long before Alla came up to question the *Amerikanka*.

"I suppose with you girls don't become engineers," she started, with Comsomol superiority. "With us they are the equal of men in everything now. We can take up any profession. Many girls in my town are going to be radio and electrical engineers." She asked many questions, informed me of the stupidities of our economic system, prophesied the downfall of capitalism. When was I going back to America?

"Around Christmastime," I said.

"Why do you use that expression?" she caught me up quickly. "We don't any more. Why do you keep a day that you know celebrates something that never happened?"

"Well, it's convenient to keep the phrase to mark the date," I said, "and anyway, as long as one has some excuse to celebrate, what does it matter what the original cause was? What days do you celebrate?"

"The Seventh of November, the First of May, the Eighth of March—Woman's Day—days that have a real meaning," she answered, annoyed at my levity. "You, an educated person, should fight the ignorance of others. Otherwise to what end did you get your knowledge? What social work do you do?"

When later on I appeared in a man's roubashka she was again shocked. "Women don't wear those," she remonstrated, "they are men's blouses. It was only in the last century that revolutionary women dressed like that, as a protest against their treatment. Now women are free, the sexual equals of men. *Please* don't wear it. *Please* take it off. It's politically incorrect. It's historically inaccurate."

"What's the difference?" I countered. "I like to wear them, and you don't mind any break with tradition or custom, do you? You've broken with the tradition of Christmas; why shouldn't I break with the tradition of roubashkas for men only? That's *my* feminine protest against the men's taking all the nice-looking clothes!" But she would not laugh with me. Patiently—she could be patient now that she had discovered the *Amerikanka* was after all but a little-cultured foreigner—she asked another Russian standing by, who could talk some English, to explain to me again: A cultured person should not make a historical mistake. When I understood, I would take it off. For right was right, wrong wrong, wasn't it? No joke could alter that.

Naturally some of these young people irritate the foreign visitor. They tend to know everything. They hardly see what is, only what should or will be. They repeat Party slogans with the hard conviction and dogmatic assurance of a puritan reformer. The intellectual superiority of the Marxist ("due to the superiority of Marxian economics as a logical system,"

says Bernard Shaw) makes some of the young Communists overbearing and argumentative; they lose their natural courtesy. On a trip with some English liberal journalists our interpreter was a young woman Communist who had worked in sweated trades for eight years in the United States and had been imprisoned several times for radical activities. It was perhaps not surprising to find her embittered. Every statement made by the visiting Britishers she belligerently contradicted. "You don't know what goes on in your own countries," she would fire at them. "You don't know how it is in your factories. You don't know how it is in your jails. I do, I've been in them." Probably they didn't, and probably she did; nevertheless her manner was exasperating.

Or else the young Communist pities the foreign visitor, because he is a benighted *bourzhui*,⁶ an exploiter, a member of a dying class in a dying order, and he doesn't even know it.

In the Soviet Union one is often reminded of the wag's remark, "The world is divided into people who think they are right." Every Comsomol is a teacher-propagandist, and a propagandist who knows what is right. Lenin was asked once what he was going to do about propagandists when the necessity for propaganda was over. "Ah," he said, with one of his rare, warm smiles, "a propagandist, you know, is always a propagandist. Even when what he fought for has been attained, he goes right on—propaganding."

So the new mind may often appear fanatical, intolerant, righteous, and narrow. Communists say this is a necessary but temporary phenomenon of the transition period, that with the ending of the class struggle the necessity for the rigidity of party discipline will end also. Whether the militant zealous fighter-for-a-cause being developed now can be transformed into a gentle, tolerant libertarian when the time for liberty arrives, cannot be foretold. Until that time comes, there is much work to be done. And meanwhile there are the Sergei Davidovitches.

⁶ In Russian "bourgeois" is the economic term for a social class, though it is also used colloquially with a contemptuous connotation; *bourzhui* is always a term of contempt or one of humorous ridicule.

CHAPTER IV

NEW INCENTIVES FOR OLD

Man loves the highest expression of his own strength.
—MARIETTA SHAGINIAN, "Three Looms"

THE CHIEF incentive to work under a socialist order is much the same as the incentive to work under other systems: to make a living. "He who does not work shall not eat," the first principle of socialism, is a reality for everybody in the USSR. Unearned incomes are swept away. There is no stock exchange. Speculation is forbidden. A man selling cigarettes at a railway station for a few more kopecks than is legally permitted is arrested.

The International Labour Office once pointed out that the obligation to work "is little more than an expression in legal terms of the necessity under which every human being lies of providing his own needs if they are not already provided for by the exertions of others."¹ Since there are no social classes in the Soviet Union whose needs are provided for by the exertions of others, everybody must work to live—as the majority have to do in other countries. Article 9 of the Constitution of the RSFSR² explicitly "recognises labour as the duty of all citizens."

By the Western question: "What will make men work if you take away the incentive of profit?" is meant "private profit." The incentive of profit is not removed in the Soviet Union; the incentive of private profit is. Everyone in the Soviet Union is a wage-earner and lives on the income of his labour; but a "wage-worker" in the Soviet Union is different

¹ International Labour Office, *Forced Labour*, Geneva, 1929, pp. 286-87.

² The Republic of European Russia.

from a wage-worker in other countries, and wages have a different social content. The difference is due to the fact that in the Soviet Union workers work not for private owners but for themselves, since they own, collectively, the national economy. The Soviet worker knows that if he works harder and better, and the enterprise in which he is engaged increases its profits, he will benefit individually and collectively. Medical and dental service, working clothes and tools, sickness and old-age insurance, sports, hospitals, libraries, movies, clubs, which the Soviet worker obtains free or at nominal cost, the worker brought up in Marxist theory does not consider he is getting "free." He knows they are the product of his own work, as much as payment for it as higher money wages.

But not every worker is conscious of the relationship between his individual money wage and his socialised wage. Many workers, especially those fresh from the village, have still a limited understanding, and the "individualist" psychology of the educated Westerner. There has not been time yet for them to grasp the meaning of the Soviet system as a whole. This makes it necessary to establish money incentives as a temporary expedient on the road toward the socialist society where, it is envisaged, neither money nor markets will exist.

This explains the present differential wage-scale in Russia based on differences in skill, training, and the responsibility of the position held. "Soviet economists claim that in the period of the transition to fully developed socialism, and even under socialism itself, differences in wages and salaries will still exist; only under communism will they disappear."³

Meanwhile a consciously directed force of public opinion will help develop the socialist psychology that the new Soviet citizen must have. The material basis for creating this psychology is being laid down as fast as obstacles and difficulties, foreseen and unforeseen, will allow. Along with it goes education, propaganda, and the application of the new "socialist incentives." In the Soviet Union as elsewhere,

³ Joseph Freeman, *The Soviet Worker*, 1932. Chapter VI contains a clear discussion of the differences between capitalist and socialised wages.

social disapproval is dreaded, social approval sought. Public opinion is a powerful goad. One is more than once reminded of a remark of Mrs. Sidney Webb's at a Fabian lecture on socialism in London. Asked what the incentives in a socialist society would be, she had given them. "Yes, but," persisted a questioner, "if a man refuses to work, in spite of all your appeals, in spite of all explanations how his labour will be for the benefit of all—what will you do then?" "We'll look at him," said Mrs. Webb, "just look at him."

Every factory in Russia to-day has its red and black boards "looking at" the workers, dividing the good ones from the slackers. Wives and children, friends and fellow workers, see there who has disgraced himself as a slacker. Children lecture their inefficient worker-fathers. I saw a group of children at a pay booth in the shape of a large black bottle marked "Shame Money," watching the drunkards and "ne'er-do-wells" as they came out to get their wages. The men hid their faces as they came. I asked a factory foreman if disgrace booths were effective deterrents. "The men may come here two or three times, but rarely more often than that," he said. "They do want to stand well with their fellows, friends, and children."

A children's book tells the story of a group of Pioneers who came to a factory and saw the machines standing idle. They pinned notices to the machines: "This man is an idler." . . . "This man drinks." . . . "This man prefers vodka to his country's welfare." Then they went in a truck through the streets to the men's homes, and found them drinking and boisterous. They read them a sermon; the men saw the error of their ways and returned to the factory. The children pulled the branding notices off the machines and registered another victory for the Five Year Plan.

Self-criticism (*samokritika*) is a factor in spurring on men and women to give their best to the building of socialism. Many of the worst stories about the inefficiency in economic life quoted by the enemies of the Soviets have been taken from the Russian press. A well-known Russian joke tells that Stalin's secretary came one morning a little late and heard a terrible rumpus in his chief's room.

"What did I tell you? Didn't I say yesterday I won't have such slipshod work? Why do I have to keep on speaking to you as if you were five years old? Don't you know our whole programme suffers when you do such careless work?"

And so on, for minutes. The trembling secretary shivered. The menacing tones grew louder, more abusive. He could stand it no longer; he turned the handle and walked in. With glowering face his chief sat at his desk, but the culprit had vanished.

"What's the matter . . . what are you staring at?" he barked.

"Why, where is . . . ?"

"Where's who?"

"Why, Comrade Stalin, whom were you scolding?"

"No one, fool," the general secretary of the Communist party said. "I was performing my daily twelve minutes of self-criticism."

Manifestoes of self-criticism are published in the press, read from lecture platforms, broadcast. "A black parade" was organised in one factory village; wagon followed wagon heaped with damaged machinery. Posters at the head of the parade read: *Foundry workers! You are guilty of a bad gap in the programme! Reduce the damage to goods and wipe off your shame!*

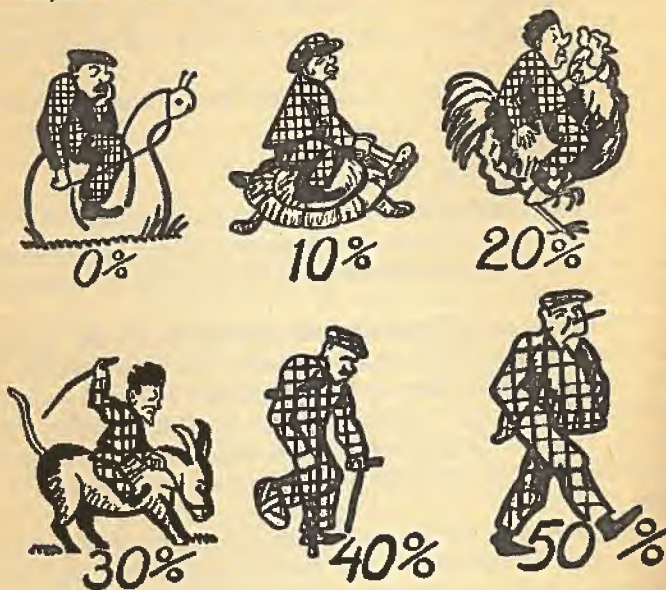
Some heroes of toil in the Soviet Union are rewarded as are heroes in wartime. They receive certificates, medals, diplomas, Orders of Lenin, for conspicuous work on the front of economic construction; awards of merit are cited in the daily press, which is read by millions. Weekly and monthly magazines reproduce photographs and biographies of these men, as papers elsewhere follow society doings.

Nina Andreyevna, a textile shock-brigader, had a certificate framed on her wall, bearing at the head these words of Stalin:

The most remarkable thing about socialist competition is that it makes a radical change in people's views of labour; it changes labour from the detested and heavy load it used to be to a thing of honour, glory, and heroism.

The certificate continues :

The District Soviet of Peasants, Workers, and Red Army deputies of Moscow gives this certificate to Comrade Nina Andreyevna on the shock-brigade day of — in honour of her achievement as the best Soviet activist and shock-worker at the factory of T—. Nina Andreyevna determinedly fought to fulfil the Promfinplan



SPEED SCALE :

(Industrial-Financial Plan) for 1929-30, showing herself to be the best worker on the front of socialist construction. With Bolshevik persistence and steady struggle for a high tempo of industrialisation Comrade Nina Andreyevna set an example and made a reality of the motto of the working class : " Fulfil the Five Year Plan in four years."

A scale of measurement classifying workers into twelve groups in the order of their speed and efficiency is posted on factories and log huts at the new plants. The twelve steps in the scale are a snail, a tortoise, a hen, a donkey, a cripple

on crutches, a walker, a runner, a galloping horse, a locomotive, a motorcycle, an automobile, and an airplane. The worker is stimulated to raise his classification, and responds to the game like a child. Ivan Ivanovitch greets Stepan Grigorevitch in the morning not by asking what horse he bet on or how the beer was last night, but by congratulating



A NEW "SOCIALIST" INCENTIVE

him on advancement from the donkey to the motorcycle class.

Individual money rewards and bonuses are given for exceptionally good work. Worker-inventors have received as much as 100,000 roubles for an invention. But, as has been said before, many inventors give back their bonuses. " What should I do with the money ? " said one. " I have all I want. I couldn't take more holidays. I have my datcha (cottage) in the country ; my children get the best education and we have the medical care we need. My wife earns her own living. The only luxury I could permit myself that money would

simplify would be to have a number of children by other women, since I should then be able to meet the alimony costs ; but it happens I love my wife and have no desire for anyone else."

There are also what are known as mass incentives. Faced with a peasant people which had to be accustomed to factory work with highly specialised machines, labour discipline, speed, precision, and "American methods," the Bolsheviks attacked their problem with characteristic realism. They have adapted from other fields any features they find useful : the technique of the political orator, the college cheerleader, the advertising expert, the broadcaster. They have seen how potent is the team spirit in school sports. Why should not this friendly rivalry work in a factory? They apply the principle ; and it has worked.

Shops, factories, districts, compete with one another in "socialist competition." Outside the administrative offices of the new construction plants are rows of blackboards giving figures of production of the different shops, graphs showing increases, decreases, "splits," "tears," "gaps," as they picturesquely call any damage done to the Plan. Dneprostroy had a system of electric light stars, and every night on each bank of the River Dnieper lights showing the achievements of the day glittered in competition. The "Order of the Laughing Camel," the Russian symbol of tardiness and laziness, is hung outside the slowest shop as the dunce's cap is put on the school dunce. A certain shop in Stalingrad bore it once for a long time, until workers and foremen became incensed and threatened to leave the plant if production was not increased enough to get rid of that sign of shame.

And always publicity. Any spectacular industrial deficiency becomes a national sensation ; delegations from other factories investigate. The press reports industrial progress as it reports war communiqués.

And the broader ideal is never lost sight of. Always, in meetings, the press, movies, theatres, the workers are told why it is so necessary to increase productivity, how the factory is a training-ground for socialism. Slogans may lose some of their effectiveness through constant repetition, but

they also can become a habit of mind. A friendly, burly tram conductor who had just brought a new tool from the tramway workers' club to a nursery school talked to me about the little "polytechnised" pupils with gentle, loving sentimentality. Suddenly his eyes became glazed, as he bent towards me and proclaimed : "We will catch up with and outstrip capitalist nations ! In the next ten years we must beat the capitalist nations or they will crush us ! The Bolsheviks must master technique ! Technique in the period of reconstruction decides everything !" These were the four chief slogans of 1931.

The most effective form of socialist competition is the shock brigade (*udarnaia brigada*—the shock-brigader is *udarnik*). The best workers are formed into "shock troops" of socialism. The Sixteenth Party Congress (1929) decided to establish these "to lead the advance guard in industrial operations." The invention was inspired. Shock brigades sprang up all over the Union, in enterprises, on farms, in schools, offices, hospitals, kindergartens, prophylactoria for prostitutes. They embrace millions of workers. The phrase has become a dictionary word. Anything done well, any exceptional effort becomes shock-brigade work ; children wash their plates, learn their lessons, in shock-brigade manner ; a high percentage of successful operations will be a hospital's shock-brigade contribution ; a well-grown head of cabbage is a shock-brigade cabbage. Musicians, actors, writers, telephonists, can perform their duties as shock-brigaders. Literary shock-brigades search the countryside for literary talent and encourage it to bloom in wall newspapers,⁴ in radio letters, in the local or national press. "The shock-brigade movement is the moving force of socialist competition," runs one slogan. "The USSR is the shock-brigade of the World Revolution," says another.

The universality of the term, the typical Russian exaggeration of its application, has given rise to some of those jokes in which the Russians make fun of their own exaggerations. Thieves, prostitutes, and divorcees, officials intrusted with carrying out the highest measure of social

⁴ See page 290.

defence (death by shooting), are cited for prosecuting their activities in a shock-brigade manner.

Towing expeditions grew out of the shock-brigade movement. Any factory that has improved output may embark on a towing expedition to another plant. A shock-brigade detachment forms the nucleus of the expedition; it examines the work of the other factory, probes into the "narrow" places, holds meetings to discuss manoeuvres. Schools, Red Cross sections, Red Army battalions, take another school, a plant, a collective farm, under their patronage and pay periodical visits to see how work is getting along. Polytechnic school boys spend a couple of days a month on farms, harvesting potatoes, lecturing the peasants on scientific agriculture, soliciting subscriptions to the latest loan, or trying to make the peasant women cease baking Easter cakes. A patron also brings the object of its patronage new machinery or tools.

Workers do not resent the shock-brigader's pacemaking. The attitude of workers under capitalism is unfriendly to the speeder-up in the factory. He is in with the management. The Russian shock-brigader's work does not cut piece rates; his pace speeds up all the workers' productivity and therefore their wages. They will earn more as a group, and the whole nation will benefit. "The man who can improve the quality of sausage while reducing its price by a few kopecks," writes Joshua Kunitz, "is more popularly acclaimed and admired than the composer of a symphony."

Individual members of shock-brigades are rewarded with special privileges; access to "closed" stores, where more goods are to be found than in the ordinary government co-operatives; first vacancies at rest homes; first chance for places in schools and universities for their children. They may be awarded a trip, as when three hundred shock-brigaders were taken for a three months' tour through Europe in 1931. Social forms of reward for the brigade as a whole may take the shape of a grant to build a new dining-room, an extra housing allowance; or a whole brigade is awarded the Order of Lenin, as a school team wins a silver baseball cup. A shock-brigader was chosen to speak at

Bernard Shaw's seventy-fifth birthday celebration in the marbled Dom Soyuzof (Hall of Columns), the former playground of the old aristocracy in Moscow. He stood on the rostrum in his brown checked shirt with sleeves rolled up and was cheered till the chandeliers rocked. The Moscow Siegesallee is a wide avenue in the Park of Culture and Rest lined on both sides with bronze busts of shock-brigaders with names and citations engraved.

Every Soviet worker is made aware that he is "doing his bit." The nation watches industrial news breathlessly. The excitement when the Stalingrad Tractor Factory was struggling to reach an output of 100 tractors a day was as intense as that of an audience listening to a fight broadcast. The score was published daily. First it mounted, day by day, 57, 58, 59, then dropped, 52, 54, 51. People mourned. The tide turns; the figures climb again, 97, 98, 99. . . . Will they make it? One more day . . . a rush for the next morning's paper . . . and . . . Yes! They had won! . . . 100! The tables were turned on the Leningrad Putilov Works, the much older factory that had once sent towing brigades to Stalingrad. Red Putilovitz had lost to Stalingrad by a score of 100 to 77.

The new ethics of Soviet Russia is to "do the job." As yet people are far from doing the job, but they are being imbued with the realisation that their present best is not enough. The engineer and railway officials who do not avert a train crash are shot. Carelessness in handling machinery may be a capital offence. Such measures seem to outsiders extremely harsh, particularly when they remember how unused to machinery Russians are. A child given a watch for the first time takes it to pieces to see what makes it tick, then can't put it together again. The Russian takes a tractor to pieces to see how it is made and can't put it together again and—the other children shoot him. It was their lovely tractor too. Albert Rhys Williams tells how the peasants lived in fear and terror of the first tractor that came to their village. It was cursed, reviled, called Antichrist, spat upon. Then they watched it perform in three days with no weariness and no worries what would have been

the back-breaking toil of three weeks for a man. Their primitive dislike for the unknown fought the evidence of their eyes. When the time came for the tractor to go on to the next village, they had been won over; they brought gifts, fell upon their knees, put garlands around the tractor's neck, called it Little Brother of Jesus.

СТАЛИНГРАДЦЫ ВПЛОТНУЮ *Тракторы*
ПОДОШЛИ К ВЫПУСКУ 100 МАШИН В ДЕНЬ.



THE STALINGRAD AND PUTILOV TRACTOR FACTORIES RUN AN
OUTPUT RACE. INSET: PHOTOGRAPH OF STALINGRAD
SHOCK-BRIGADER
("Pravda")

The same behaviour occurs in Central Asia to-day. Primitive peasants in the hills hear a tooting monster, see its glaring yellow eyes, see it speeding along their highway. "If we blind it, it can go no further." They aim at the great eyes, shoot. The automobile is brought to a standstill and coming curiously down to it, the peasants find a wounded man slumped over the wheel, who, before he dies, explains to them what a car can do, how it will bring them seed and food, shoes, doctors and teachers, take them to towns where they can learn miraculous new things. The man dies. The peasants stand, uncertain. Shall they try to make it go? But how? There is a council. "We will bring this magic horse

food and drink." They bring hay and water. "A strange steed," they marvel. "It will drink, but it will not eat."

It is not only in outlying parts that such beliefs persist, or that strange action is inspired by them. Along the banks of the Oka River I noticed deserted-looking wheelbarrows standing upside down with the wheel removed. "Why?" I asked my companion, an American efficiency engineer. "Oh, they take these home because they're afraid some one will steal them!"

These people are being brought in contact with twentieth-century industrial machinery. Julian Huxley, on his Russian trip, remarked that the best minds in England were wasting their energy regretting the advent of the machine, instead of accepting it as an inevitable development and applying their inventive thinking to seeking how to use it to the best advantage. The Russian, knowing the machine will not exploit him, but will instead bring him leisure and material goods and culture, loves it. He is taught its nobility. Machines are praised in music and song, poster, cartoon and photograph; they are made the themes of literature and poetry. Alexander Bezymensky, a young Soviet poet, exclaims:

I am Sun and Steel and Concrete.
In the womb of factories, beneath the heart of engines,
I was conceived and born—yea, I am a worker!
My first movement—the swing of a hammer!

And another, Alexei Gastev:

On either side beams and girders
Thrust upward; they are sturdy, they are strong.
I look at them and grow straight.
Fresh iron blood pours into my veins.
I have grown taller,
I am growing shoulders of steel and arms immeasurably strong.

With so much glorifying of the machine, is the new workman a better worker than he was before the Revolution? The inefficiency of Russian workmen with machinery has become a byword among American engineers. Most tell the

same story. They are careless ; they do not oil or clean their machines ; the life of a tractor in Russia is three years, whereas in the United States it is eight or nine.

" But can they learn, are they machine-minded ? " I asked a number of Russian and American engineers.

" They can learn, especially the young ones, and they do learn, fast. Comsomols are so eager that they don't stay on one machine once they have mastered it ; they want to learn every machine in the place. That is one of our troubles," an engineer in Stalingrad confided. " Hardly have I trained a good man, and he knows how to handle his machine perfectly, when he wants to be out on another to learn that one also. The young ones do not like the monotony of tending always the same machine."

But though the younger ones can learn, the older ones are sometimes slow and obstinate. They do not want to be told, or when they can do one thing well, they think they know it all. Especially Russian engineers trained in the old Russian school seem to resent advice and interference.

Many jokes are told of the inefficiency of workers. According to one of these, Maxim Gorki came to a beautiful factory that specialised in the making of elevators. " Well, comrade, this is beautiful," he says, " you are turning out these magnificent elevators. Is it not amazing what our country has achieved ? . . . What ? Ah, you are not turning out the whole elevator yet ; the parts still come from America, but you assemble them ? Well, that is only natural if one considers the immense amount of work our country is doing ; it cannot be expected we should do everything at once. . . . Ah, only a few are assembled here ? But the putting together even of only a few demands technical skill and science. . . . You say it is all imported, you do not assemble any ? Ah, but you distribute the product, that also is a great achievement over what our workmen used to be able to do. . . . What is that you say ? You do not distribute elevators ? Well, then, man, what exactly is it that you do here in this factory ? " " We make these notices, comrade Gorki : ' Lift out of order.' "

Any visitor to the Soviet Union knows how frequently

elevators do not run, how often plumbing is out of order, how slow repair men are. I lived in a new apartment house in which the motor that pumped the water had been put in wrong, and although complaints were made every few days, in the two months I lived there the workmen never fixed it.

Teaching the workers efficiency is a slow process and expensive. But the state has no choice ; it is part of the cost of the Revolution. It is often asked : Will Russian workers ever be the kind of workers mass production and industrial efficiency require ? So far they fall short of the American standard. I have seen men in working hours standing about smoking, gossiping, discussing, even one asleep at his machine ; I have seen them laugh at the foreman who reprimanded them. " That's it," said an American engineer ; " the men won't acknowledge authority ; it's much harder to introduce labour discipline here than it would be in a country where a man knew he'd be fired for this sort of behaviour." The Russian authorities are trying to meet this situation by education, trying to make social disapproval as strong a weapon as firing. Among the Communists, the shock-brigaders, there is discipline. The less responsible, more apathetic citizens are less easily influenced. But it does not appear an insurmountable obstacle to Soviet authorities, who rarely minimise their difficulties. They are aware that the transition stage has to be gone through. And meanwhile in the words of Colonel Hugh Cooper, American consulting engineer for the great hydroelectric dam on the Dnieper River : " Our job is the first construction job in the history of all Russia where large-scale mechanisation was ever tried ; and if you ever have a similar experience trying to teach people to use forty-ton locomotive cranes, air compressors, air drills, and all the other apparatus, such as we sent over there, don't get discouraged, because you eventually can win."

CHAPTER V

"I AM A WORKER!"

The whole purpose of the Plan is to make a nation of eager, conscious workers out of a nation that was a lump of sodden, driven slaves.

—WALTER DURANTY

RUSSIA is changing human attitudes; and in no class have the attitudes changed so widely as among factory workers.

A short story, "Three Looms" by Marietta Shaginian, illustrates the change graphically by describing a situation one meets repeatedly. Old Revolutionists who "spent their lives whipping up labour against intolerable conditions of work," now in office are exhorting those workers to work twice as hard in order to increase productivity. In the story women workers in the textile mills are being asked to tend three looms instead of two. A strike had once been called because of that demand but at that time the task had been imposed on labour by capital. Now the leaders are urging the workmen to accept what years ago they had called "mean exploitation and a new noose around the neck of the toiler." Of course the workers are angry. "We were met by such a hail of abuse that my unaccustomed soul turned rabbit," says the narrator of the story. The young Red director, their own man, born and brought up in the factory, was sneered at, interrupted, abused. It was the unpopular chairman of the administration who turned the tide. This was his appeal:

"Girls, you say it is hard for you, we press too much, we rip the hide from you? You are perfectly right. But whom else can we press except you? Who'll carry us over the top, if you don't? Do you

imagine that the capitalists will run your business for you? That the merchants and the foreigners will save your business for you? Who turned Yudenich away from Leningrad? You. Who hungered and suffered cold in the factories? You. Who started those factories working? You. And if you don't work until it hurts, we will not be able to continue your business, to open new factories, to fill the markets with goods, to satisfy the peasant. Without your help we can't do a damned thing. It's up to you to make a last effort."

The meeting was won over.

An old woman got up, a thin ancient woman, a weaver with forty years of labour in the factory behind her. . . . She lifted the ends of her shawl in both hands, coughed, then remarked in a businesslike voice: "Well, girls, we'll try. You can tend three looms."

The author tries to explain what it was that made the speech so effective. It was as if they had been turned to children, she says, who, complaining that they cannot learn their lesson, are told by their teacher to try two pages instead of one.

The method was used by Napoleon. And Napoleon was adored. For what? For the faith that men can accomplish miracles. Man loves the highest expression of his own strength.

Lenin was adored for the same reason.

Since the industrial revolution conditions of factory work have tended to stifle the creative faculties of workers. In Western countries the workman works to live; such personal life as he has he lives outside the plant. It occurs to few factory workers to live their inner life at the workbench. The Soviets keep imagination alive within the factory gates. The plant is the centre of life for the worker. He can go to the factory movie, theatre, club, library; eat, study, and play there. His children are educated in kindergartens and schools attached to the plant; the worker-mother leaves her work to nurse her baby in the factory crèche. In their Red corner children discuss the problems of production their parents are facing in practice across the courtyard; they

may even run in and watch the punch press or study the conveyor belt for the building of a similar one in their own carpenter shop.

In the Russian factory the worker sees his work in relation to society. His work life is not the mere mechanical repetition of a process, making the eyes of a doll, spokes for wheels. He can know all he wants to about manufacture, costs, destination of goods, the reason they are made. He participates in determining industrial policy. At regular intervals he attends production conferences where reports are made by the factory administration. He can know all the wheels set in motion by his work on the eyes of a doll. The Russian factory is making for the workman the kind of life artists enjoy, in which work is a necessary expression of personality. A Soviet factory worker could no longer be called "a hand." The factories are his, not to own and make money out of, but to get happiness and "freedom" out of.

I stopped at a lathe in the Stalingrad Tractor Factory. "What are you working for?" I asked a man in overalls. "Swoboda—freedom," he answered. I stared at a grizzled face in the steel-smelting shop of the Red Putilovitz Factory in Leningrad. "What are you working for?" I asked. "For the World Revolution," he said, "to make workers free the world over."

For the Russian factory worker to say that he is "free" is an achievement. Under the Czar there were long hours of work, no holidays or only such as the worker could pay for out of his wages, nothing to be done in leisure time except drink. There was little hope for better conditions for his children, who started early working equally long hours at even lower wages. Factories were legally required to maintain schools for young workers, but in 1898 there was one school for every forty-three factories, embracing 2 per cent of the juvenile workers.¹

There were miseries and discriminations of which little is now known. Fear ruled the worker's life: fear of lowered

¹ Joseph Freeman, *op. cit.* The first chapter of this book gives a vivid description of the conditions of Russian factory workers under the old régime.

wages, unemployment, spies in the plant; fear of the foremen, technicians, engineers, fellow workers. By an old custom known as *mogarich* new employees gave presents, wine, sausage, vodka, to appease the old workers. Members of national minorities and women were discriminated against. There were no workers' committees to represent the men's demands; meetings and strikes were illegal. Bosses were in undisputed authority and were backed by the factory administration and the Government.

Even when his conditions improved materially, the worker before the Revolution had few human rights. After many strikes, toward the end of the nineteenth century decrees were passed to better conditions, but they remained a dead letter.² Factory inspectors were appointed, but they might be secret police or spies. To want to learn to read and write, to engage in any "cultural activities," to sue in the law-courts, meant instant dismissal or death. Labour knew nothing of and had no interest in the wider aspects of its work.

"I was born in a factory: I know," says Brynda the old weaver in Nikiforov's novel *Ivan Brynda*. "It was so that a body could not even breathe freely. The foreman used to punch me in the face. I'd rather croak than crawl back under that régime again." Other Soviet novels—such as Libedinsky's *A Week*, Gladkov's *Cement*, Liashko's *The Furnace*, Semyonov's *Natalia Tarpova*³—describe the proletarian's life. Dazed, crushed, apathetic, he could but drink. "I drink just enough to rest my soul," says a metal worker in one of Uspensky's stories. "It's fine when one ceases to feel anything," says another.

To-day material conditions are still very unequal over the Soviet Union, and many of the big new industrial towns are still little more than construction camps, with conditions of living much what they are in any construction camp. But in the big towns the best-paid workers give a picture of what all workers may some day expect. The new apartment houses are clean, well lighted; they have bathrooms and kitchens and stand in their own grounds with trees and gardens

² Joseph Freeman, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

³ Of these only Gladkov's *Cement* has as yet been translated into English.

around. They are not all well built because of the shortage of labour, skill, and materials, and the hurry in which everything has had to be done. But that is temporary. The end the worker sees before him is what some have already achieved. The exclusive residential sections of modern Soviet cities are the new suburbs consisting of apartment blocks reserved for workers. Each worker here has a telephone, electric light, a radio, gas, running water, central heat, and much window space.

For the rest, the worker gets his holiday with full pay, from two weeks upward according to the work he does. His children get the best education the country has to offer; he and his family are entitled to hospital care, doctors, dentists, funerals, free or at a nominal charge. The majority of workers receive old-age pensions between fifty and sixty years of age, according to the length of time and the nature of their work.

The Russian worker can afford movies, concerts, theatres, puppet shows; he can sit in the orchestra stalls or in a box. He has access to libraries. There is nothing going on in the country in which he cannot share. And his wants, both cultural and material, are increasing by leaps and bounds; supply cannot keep up with them. In 1913 forty-five million pairs of shoes were produced; in 1931, eighty-four million; yet it is difficult to buy shoes to-day. The Russian peasant has learned to wear them. And with other goods it is the same; more are produced, but more people want and can buy them.

The rôles of workers and "boss" have been reversed. The worker can complain to headquarters if a boss acts too boss-like. A foreman at a factory a week's ride from Moscow in a temper slapped a workingman. The foreman took the next train to Moscow, to explain his action at headquarters. "Boss" and worker are on the same committees, discuss the problems of their shop together. The new "bosses" are men who started as workers or farm hands a short time before, as frequently in America. But where the promoted workingman in a Western factory will develop "boss psychology," in the Soviet factory he does not. The comrade-foreman's attitude

toward the workers remains what it was when he was a comrade-worker. He is merely doing a more responsible job, and he is neither feared nor resented for that. The reason for all this is that the employee does not work for the "boss," but the boss for the employee—and himself. The foreman or director of a plant is as much an employee of the collective enterprise as is the machine-tender.

What kind of a workman must the new Bolshevik be?

Technical knowledge, manual skill, and efficiency are most desirable. Hard driving power and no compromise are essential. An easy-going or neglectful workman, a man who throws a monkey wrench into a tractor, even though only out of curiosity to see what will happen, must be dealt with as ruthlessly as a political traitor was before 1917. The careless workman may not mean to do damage to the construction of socialism, but he does it as surely as did a Revolutionary who left secret plans under the eyes of the secret police under the Czar.

The measures the enemies of the régime will stoop to are a model of fertile inventiveness. Two years ago, when queues before the shops were leading reporters and observers to conclude that the new state was breaking down and could not manage retail distribution, bands of people attached themselves to the queues to make them longer still for the sole purpose of producing a more unfavourable effect. The sudden shortage of small change in the summer of 1930, which almost dislocated economic life, was to a great extent inspired by rumours spread among peasants that the Czar was returning and would shoot those who had no silver to offer him.

The conveyor in the Nijni automobile factory went out of order. Every hour or so work had to be stopped until it was attended to. "Conveyors don't usually behave like that," the American engineer in charge said. "Either they break down altogether or else one repairs them and they stay repaired. There must be some one tampering." Wrong materials are deliberately ordered, or ordered for the wrong dates; work is held up; faulty machines are installed; wrong specifications, plans, and estimates are made. The Industrial

Party trial disclosed other measures that slowed up the wheels of industrialisation.

An American clergyman was railing against the "brutal tyranny of the Soviets in putting down counter-Revolution." He came to the Soviet Union, saw the problem for himself. He was almost apologetic. "At home I condemned your many shootings," he said, "now I don't see how you manage with so few. You are lenient compared to what we would stand."

The situation is a Russian dilemma with which few outsiders sympathise. They lump together all Soviet disciplinary measures and condemn them as "Bolshevik tyranny." They rarely realise the real danger to which the Soviet state is subjected from its internal enemies.

An attempt has been made in recent years to soften the severity of sentences. A. N. Soltz, in a sharp speech in August, 1931, condemned the policy of wholesale imprisonment and exile of engineers and specialists. The country could not afford it. "Judges are growing overzealous in carrying out this duty," he said, "we must think of our labour power."

From the beginning it has been Soviet policy to forgive and reinstate wrongdoers. "We punish severely but we grant amnesty to many," said Soltz in discussing this characteristic with me. "We want to set an example, not revenge ourselves." When the example has been set there is no further interest in punishment. The Menshevik engineers sentenced to death one day with the curses and imprecations of the whole country upon them, found their sentences commuted to ten years' imprisonment the next. A year later several of them were teaching classes in engineering, living with their families in their own houses on regular professors' pay. Their students spoke of them in the highest terms, as "exceptionally clever men, who had confessed their errors and now were serving the country loyally."

Four men in a civil aviation factory were arrested for "wrecking." They were given ten-year sentences. A year later they were all amnestied, given 10,000 rouble bonuses for good work done, and sent back to work, with no stigma attached.

The Soviets do not sulk with their criminals, either regular ones or industrial ones. The authorities make it a point to know when "strong bad men" or formerly disloyal ones are ready to serve the State; then they use them.

It was practical wisdom that made the Russians choose American engineers to work on their technical building projects. The average American engineer is not interested in political theory or intellectual argument. He is interested in getting the bridge built, the road laid down, the tractor operating on four wheels. The American engineer in Russia has his mind on his job, and all obstacles to getting the job done are just so many obstacles, whether they are inefficient Russian engineers, shortage of material, or discussions of Marxian theory during working hours. I have seen American agricultural engineers work twenty hours a day during harvest time, drive for miles in the middle of the night to get broken parts mended so that the tractor could go on working next day, while the Russian agronomist walked about the fields wringing his hands, his nose glued to a textbook.

"Why do you work so hard?" I asked one American. "You don't get paid extra for it; you're not a communist, are you?"

"Gee, no!" he laughed. "Of course not. I want to get the job done."

Another, an elderly consulting engineer, met my question with another: "Do you realise that at home I am consultant to a corporation, but here I'm consultant to a nation?"

The American engineer's lack of interest in the political side of his work flabbergasts the Russian. An earnest foreman at Dnieprostroy told me with despair of the vain attempts he had made to draw American engineers into "the work." Their participation would help to gather in the non-Communist Russian workers; and surely the Americans must want that? When I said the Americans were doing the job and he might best leave well alone, he was only more bewildered. I did not tell him that a brilliant American engineer who had been three years in the Soviet Union designing and building factories had asked me confidentially

that day, "I wish you would tell me, just what is this dialectic materialism?"

German engineers are different. Some of them are politicians. They know something of Marx, they are "politically educated," they take sides. Some are actively counter-Revolutionary. Some German engineers sabotaged in ways almost as various as Russian counter-Revolutionists. Some worked well, but it was not always known which could be trusted. American political ignorance may be preferred by realistic politicians in Russia to German political wisdom.

The Russian worker has work, hope, security, self-respect. He looks forward to a better future, with better living-conditions, more leisure. Already he has six days off a month. At present his Saturday work and overtime curtail his leisure, but he looks forward to a time when he will work five hours a day or less. And he will be able to choose from a wide variety of occupations, sports, and cultural activities to fill his leisure.

The worker knows the country belongs to him. There is a swing to his gait that betrays his consciousness of it. When asked his status, in a self-assured, unhesitating voice he answers, "Worker." An American Senator in a crowded tramcar elbowed his way right and left. He shoved a workman too hard. "One can see you're no worker!" snorted the Russian. In the same tone an American might freeze up a rival—"One can see you're no gentleman!"

The worker ranks above the intelligentsia, above scientists, professional men, doctors, lawyers; he is respected where the former bourgeoisie, private traders, rich farmers, priests—men who once ruled his life—are held in contempt. In the lawcourts when he is asked his social origin and replies "Worker" he knows he has won half his case. His children get the coveted places from crèche to university, and he himself gains admission to sanatoriums, rest houses, and vacation beauty spots because of his class.

The state takes a benevolent interest in the individual worker's welfare, down to the smallest detail. At the lawcourt a special lawyers' consultation gives him free information on tangled legal matters; at clinics and consultations

he gets advice and medicines free, not as the "lowest class who can't afford to pay" and with the stigma of pauperism attached, but because he, in the long run, pays for them with his labours. At his club are courses in reading, writing, politics, social affairs, languages, science, music, art, which he may attend without cost. When he is sick he goes to a hospital and his wages are not docked. If he has an accident there will be no long and arduous fight for compensation. In both cases he will be looked after by the social-insurance fund. The state inspects his factory, to make sure the conditions of work are as good as they can be under the circumstances. Shortage of personnel and of means still makes such work less effective than it might be, but it is improving as fast as training allows.

The worker is free to move. Some foreigners are under the impression that Soviet workers are chained to their jobs, with maybe even soldiers to keep them there. There is no such force, and hundreds daily leave their enterprises, hoist their bundles to their shoulders, and seek other work. One sees them in trains and at railway stations, sitting on their bundles waiting for almost any train going anywhere. They are either moving to better jobs or indulging a long-cherished desire to see the world, which they were not able to do before the Revolution. There is, however, an increasing propaganda against "job-changers" because the practice impairs industrial progress.⁴

Vocational guidance is widespread in the USSR. It is intended that every young person leaving school shall be tested for his aptitudes and helped in selecting his work. The Obuch Institute in Moscow is the central institute for the study of professional diseases. Here many tests are carried out. Children are studied by physiologists and psychiatrists; the "whole personality" is considered in advising on jobs, not only selected aptitudes.

There is also a network of special institutes which conduct

⁴ There is a provision in the Labour Code allowing penalisation in extreme cases of "malicious disorganisation of production," such penalisation taking the form of striking a man off the rolls of unemployment exchanges so that he will be able to get only unskilled work.

tests for special professions, such as the Central Psycho-Physical Institute where the personnel of railroad and water transport is studied. The attractive woman head of it has herself been a locomotive engineer. This institute has branches in eighteen towns, in Tiflis, Kiev, Tomsk, Baku, Sverdlovsk, Tashkent, as well as in the main towns in European Russia. It has jurisdiction over everybody in any way connected with transport, from inspectors, station chiefs, safety workers, to engineers, conductors, switchmen. In 1930, 8,000 workers were examined by the Moscow institute, 5,000 by the Vladivostok branch, 70,000 altogether. In time every transport worker in the Union is to go through one of the branches.

The case record sheet asks the following questions :

Where did you get your professional training? What are your parents? Where were you brought up? What were the conditions of your work before you were tested? What were your social conditions before eighteen years of age? What were your conditions and nourishment between eighteen and twenty? What were your conditions during the famine? What different positions have you held during your life and were you satisfied with your jobs? How much food do you eat? Do you understand your work well? What do you think harms the quality of your work? For instance : Does standing at your work make you too tired? Or is it too hot in summer or too cold in winter? Do you complain of draughts, etc.? What do you do at home after your work? How many hours do you work? Have you social work? How do you spend your leisure? Do you feel you fit the position?

The institute also works on job analyses called "profiles of the profession." These state what qualities are needed to make a successful locomotive engineer, inspector, signalman, etc. Job analysts in the institute often do the job themselves first; the locomotive-engineer head of the institute knew exactly what qualities that work required. The institute has a life-size locomotive with all the gadgets necessary to make it run, and tracks, signals, and switches.

There are vocational institutes that undertake research in methods and study accidents, others which specialise in

professional diseases and industrial-fatigue work. The Obuch Institute sends out field units to study the mental and physical diseases of workers. I found a sturdy peasant girl milking a cow, a doctor by her side recording her motions to see if she could not save herself fatigue. In a hayfield I came across a line of women with rakes in their hands and what looked like gas masks over their faces. They looked like the Ku Klux Klan, but were only workers being protected from flying bits of chaff.

In Soviet Russia there are no "interests" to prevent the change of working conditions that cause ill health. In a rubber factory girl workers periodically fell prey to a kind of alcoholic frenzy; it was found that benzine used in one of the processes poisoned them. The day the doctor's report was made a meeting of the Factory Committee was called and within three days the required measures had been taken. It was to the best interests of everybody that the girls should be so protected. Workers do not have to suspect that something done for their welfare is really done for private profit.

The Soviet worker is not a slave to the machine. The machine in Russia is to improve man, not exploit him, and the worker knows it. "Machinery is made for man, not man for machinery," said Karl Marx. Modern industrial methods to increase productivity are seized upon avidly and employed widely. But whereas the conveyor in the Ford works never stops, and the worker, if he wishes to retire, must work fast in order to go out, workers on the belt at Kharkov or Stalin-grad are allowed to stop every hour for five minutes to attend to their needs, smoke a cigarette, gossip a moment. This may sound a small thing but it means much. It shows the workman the whole ideal for which the Revolution was fought—that the worker may be free, enslaved no more by machinery or productive processes than by a ruling class or the state.

In Nijni Novgorod (now Gorki) an old workingman who had known factory work before the Revolution, the factories with insufficient light and air, saw the new shining glass assembly room, glinting in the sun. "Where's the Ford plant?" he asked. They pointed to the shop. "That's not a

factory!" he cried. "That's not a place to make motor trucks, that's a place to grow flowers in!" The men feared at first this new giant plant—how could one tell that it was not merely a new instrument of slavery? But toward the end of its construction in 1931, four and five thousand eager people came daily from the collective farms helping to shovel dirt, for no pay. "Why do you do it?" an American engineer asked. They looked at him. "Our factory," they said. "We must get our factories set up. Without factories we cannot build our new life."

CHAPTER VI

HOBNAILS IN THE UNIVERSITY

Now I can learn something of what the universe holds!

—A PEASANT GIRL

STUDENTS are not a separate group in the Soviet Union. Any one can be a student, although in institutions where present conditions do not give enough room for every one who applies, preference is given to workers and peasants. As more professors are trained, and more universities built, more young people become students. For it costs nothing to study; on the contrary, students are paid stipends by the state sufficient to keep them while they attend school. The Soviet Union looks forward to a time when all its young people will have higher education; it believes that education is not a prize to be distributed among the few, but something every citizen should be enabled to enjoy.

Students are not a class apart, and not different from other young workers; there is no "student life" as in other countries, with sororities and fraternities, corps and bohemian ways of living. It gives the visitor fresh from Oxford or Harvard a shock to walk into the First Moscow University and see labourers in workingmen's caps, or peasants with brown lined faces, to hear labourers' boots clapping down the white marble staircases. The university illustrates the new system as spectacularly as the opera house and the lawcourt.

The faces coming down those stairs are not all young. Many of those students are married, with families. Some have been sent to college after years of work in the fields, in factories. Doctors who have been practising for years in

distant villages come back to take "courses of perfection"; peasants used to hand ploughs and beliefs in divine causes of drought or crop failure are learning the latest methods of scientific agriculture. Old Revolutionists at last have a chance to become proficient in some speciality. Sascha Petrovich had fought the Germans in the war, had defended the barricades in Moscow, fought Whites in Siberia. He had lived through the famine, capture, and escape. He was for six months a commander of the Red Fleet in the Baltic; had been in China two years buying tea for the Soviets, then had built radios in Tashkent. "Always I wanted to go to the university," he said, as we sat at the wooden table in the students' dining-room. "I had just started studying chemistry before the Revolution, and now again I want to have a speciality. The demand now is all for technicians, experts. I have done so many different jobs, as all we early Bolsheviks had to. Now I want to finish my studies, graduate . . . if it's not too late." I looked at his black hair and fresh young face. "Maybe I don't look old," he said, "but often I feel that I'm finished, that I've lived my life. I'm thirty-two!"

Many of these students, like all Russian adults, have been through three or four epochs of history. For many of them there is an anticlimax, too, a chasm between the romantic days of the Revolution and the "peacetime tasks." "From the taking of the Winter Palace to thirty-two kopecks for a yard of muslin," says a character in a short story dealing with the NEP period.¹ But studying, preparing themselves for the tasks of the Five Year Plan, is to many of them again romance. "The club, the tractor, books, have replaced the naked blade," says the old revolutionary in the short story; to the young communist these are frequently now as exciting.

Some women students look like housewives out to do their morning shopping; yet they also are studying to be engineers, foremen, diplomats, lawyers, journalists. There are more women than men students of medicine, education, and languages. The following figures are taken from a questionnaire sent to students in the medical faculty at the Second Moscow University in 1927-28:

¹ Khotyaintsev in Alexei Tolstoy's *Azure Cities*.

1. Social Origin :	Workers	24.7%
	Peasants	33.7%
	Batraks ²	1.3%
	Employees	40.3%

The percentage of peasants and workers is increasing from year to year.

2. Nationality :	Russians	73%
	Ukrainians	3%
	White Russians	2%
	Jews	14%
	All others	8%
3. Sex :	Men	42%
	Women	58%

Men are increasing in the younger courses.

4. Age :	Average, 26.7 years.
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This is higher than before the Revolution on account of the civil war and the change in the social groups of the students. Peasants' children are the oldest, employees' the youngest. The average age is decreasing.

5. Family :	Single	65%
	Married	29%
	Widowed	2%
	Divorced	4%
	45% of the married have children.	
	36% have 1 child.	
	6% have 2 children.	
	3% have 3 children.	

² Peasants were divided into four groups: kulak, seredniak, bedniak, batrak—rich, middle, poor peasant, and hired farm labourer. The kulak—the word means literally "fist"—was the best off, though by no means rich in the American sense. He acted as local money-lender, and exploited the labour of poorer farmers. It was the kulak's exploitation of labour rather than the ownership of two horses or an extra plough, and his opposition to collectivisation, that made the Soviets treat him as an enemy of the new régime. The word "muzhik" has always meant in Russia the illiterate, ignorant, and backward peasant, whose picturesqueness was exploited by Russian writers of fiction and poetry. The economic term "peasant" is *krestianin* (fem: *krestianka*). As the peasants achieve culture, literacy, and cleanliness they object strongly to being called muzhiks. "I am a krestianin," a peasant says when some one refers to him as "muzhik." To call a man muzhik is an insult, unless he does it himself in self-condemnation.

Most of those with children are peasants.

6. Party :	Party Member	11%
	Comsomols	22%
	Non-Party	67%

The party percentage is increasing. Eighty-five per cent of the students are members of trade unions.

7. Education :

Approximately 50 per cent went through second-grade schools (chiefly children of workers and peasants). Seventeen per cent have middle-school education.

Students in the Soviet Union do not merely go to college, wondering what they're going to do when they come out, where they are going to break into life. In other countries they decide that when they are through college they will look for "a" job, and sometimes the job is not related to the subjects they have studied. Some get jobs because of their family influence, personality, looks. Others, who have not all these assets, do not get them. In moments of discouragement it must appear as if society were organised to make the finding of suitable work difficult.

Russian students have no such fears. They know they will not have to look for jobs : the jobs will be waiting. And in addition to their regular work they will be able to follow any particular bent, not as a hobby, but as important "social work." Their own job will be not an end in itself, but a contribution to society's need. I asked an economics student what she was going to do when she graduated. "I shall get a responsible job in a government department," she said. "I shall be working for the state." Her eyes shone.

Students in the USSR are something of a cross between the German and the American student : studious with a penchant for theory like the German, but sharing the American liking for practical work. The amount of sheer factual knowledge they imbibe surprises the visitor. An American clergyman, member of a tourist group visiting the

Anti-religious Museum in Moscow, asked his young girl guide : "How do you account for it that the American workman is materially the best off in the world and yet is religious ?" The little girl grew scarlet with embarrassment, courtesy fighting indignation : "Best off !" she cried. "Without unemployment, old-age, or sickness insurance ! With no security in his job ! Do you know that the Labour Research Department's inquiry into the silk industry in 1929 found there were 26,400 unemployed out of 132,000 silk workers in America, and 5,600 in New Jersey alone ?"

An interesting viewpoint towards the new education I got from Stella, a tall, pretty Comsomol student of twenty-three. She had been a worker in a chemical factory but had been transferred to teaching English and acting as a guide. She was not happy in her new work, though it brought her more money, less hard work, and some travelling. "I have so much less opportunity for social work," she complained, "and in the chemical factory I was on the point of being made a skilled worker. I was in the Comsomol cell there, and the people would bring me their problems ; I could learn a lot, and really help them. Now I can do very little except organise and go to meetings. I've just come from a protest meeting about the Scottsboro case."

"Isn't it interesting to you to be with foreigners, to learn about other countries ?"

"Yes, when they know conditions in their own countries," she said. "But many of them, especially your American tourists, don't. And it's no use arguing with them. They think you in America have freedom and democracy and justice and that the workers are not exploited. One even said to me, 'The Negro is no longer discriminated against in America.' One can't learn very much from such people."

I asked Sergei Dinamov, vice-president of languages and literature in the Communist Academy, whether the standard of learning was lower now that the old intelligentsia and their children were a minority of the students. "On the contrary," he answered, "peasants and workers often make better students. Their minds are virgin soil, eager, curious ; they want intensely to learn, and they work. Many of them

work on all their free days. And they have few wrong ideas to get out of their heads first. That is one advantage of illiteracy ! ”

No subject seems too abstract or difficult for the Soviet student to tackle. A girl tram conductor, her head bound in a spotted green kerchief, was poring over *Anatomy and Its Modern Application to the Science of Living* ; a cloakroom attendant in the movie school, over *Orthography and the Evolution of Speech*. One may find a loom-tender discussing warmly with a press-operator the authorship of Shakespeare's plays or the respective merits of Beethoven and Schumann. There is a catholic interest in literature, history, the arts, the drama.

Whatever their speciality, all students have to take required courses in political economy, historic materialism, history of the Party, the class struggle, dialectic materialism, Leninism. Moral and ethical questions are dealt with in dialectic materialism. The theories of Marx, Engels, and Lassalle are taught to every one, students and nonstudents. Each student has to do practical work half his time, in some line connected with his speciality. A student at the Academy of Music organises musical circles and arranges concerts in factory and club ; agricultural students work on the collective farms. Every student must work a minimum of one month a year in a factory. A girl studying at the Pedagogical Institute had worked in a silk-weaving factory for a month, another at a factory making photographic plates. Students of education may go to factories or collective farms to see how “ polytechnisation ” is worked out ; they become temporary working members of the factory or kolhoz, worker-students.

Before being sent out for their practical work, they have courses in the technology of the industry, theoretic courses on the organisation and protection of labour, methods of wage-fixing. These theoretic courses are to supplement their practical knowledge of working conditions.

University-trained men and women are wanted for every industrial and cultural activity in the country. Even for the movies there is a four-year university course, and one of the busiest centres in Moscow is the place where one may earn,

so to speak, one's Doctorate of Films. It requires as much study and training to become a motion-picture actor as it does to become an engineer or a scientist. In 1931, 1,800 students attended the school attached to the Mejrabpom Film plant. In Russia a movie studio is called a movie factory.

The school is a training-ground for every member of the profession : camera men, directors, scenario writers, designers, costumiers, cinema administrators, and “ cinema economists,” the equivalent of our commercial directors. As usual, half of the time is spent in theoretical work, half in practical ; the students write scenarios, build their own scenery, direct and shoot their own pictures, and show them to critical audiences. Every student takes all subjects taught at the school so that he can fill any branch of the profession and understand how they hang together. I saw bobbed-haired young actresses poring over books on costume and design in the library, writers studying camera technique, directors-to-be making up as peasants for a part in a film on collectivisation.

As soon as the student knows something about his special subject he may act as assistant to the director, scenarist, or camera man, or he may act in a film. Mustapha, the wildest of the wild boys in the besprizorni “ talkie ” *Road to Life*, had been a student at this film studio for six months when he was picked for the part.

Theoretical work embraces the usual courses in the political, economic, and social sciences, dialectic materialism, historical materialism, Leninism, etc. There are special courses in the methodology of art, history of literature, dramaturgy, science of the theatre, the history of the cinema. Actors have to study anatomy, physiology, psychology, make-up and costuming, music and sound principles, “ technology of the actor's craft,” and “ the art of being an actor.”

One might think that with so many courses to attend the students would be glad when work was over. Not at all. They come back after classes are over, to meetings, discussions, and conferences ; and lively debates take place. Any and every

problem that might conceivably come up in the screen world, questions ranging from the interpretation of Marxian philosophy in a film to problems of camera technique, are discussed. A foreign film is shown once a week and commented on by professors and students.

Admission to the movie school is even more difficult than to other universities because requirements are higher. An applicant must have taken either the nine-year school course or three years at a Workers' University. His parents must be workers or peasants, usually. Eighty-five per cent of the 1,800 students in 1931 were of such origin and only 15 per cent children of the intelligentsia.

Professors and teachers are seasoned experts in their field. Any able man in the film world may teach. Eisenstein and Pudovkin, the best-known Soviet film directors, are both professors at the school; actors also give lectures on their art.

I wandered about the school and talked with a number of the eager young men and women. All asked me about the "film schools" of England and America and would scarcely believe that there were none. "How do they learn filming, then?" The girls, in their athletic tights and with long plaits or short hair, were as attractive as Western movie actresses and as ambitious. But their ambition was not directed toward any personal career, but to the mite they would contribute toward the building of socialism. As a black-haired, rosy-checked young girl—one could see her in her village—expressed it: "I don't intend to act in any film that won't further the Five Year Plan. We've got to help our backward people, and our films can have as important a cultural significance as any other branch of education, else they are not worth making."

Students' quarters until recently have been very crowded. Many still live in overfilled dormitories. Going along the streets of any university town at night—Kharkov, Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow—one may see through uncurtained windows working men and women gathered around a lamp conning books, tinkering with tools, lying on their beds with papers propped before them. These also are students. One

student told me of his dormitory, in which twelve men and five girls lived; each had his few effects and one piece of furniture beside the bed, but there were no curtains.

Nowadays, however, they are building as fast as possible special blocks of apartments for students only. Eight or ten of these barrack-like blocks were completed on the outskirts of Moscow last summer near the Leningrad Chaussée. I went through one of the buildings. In the bare entrance hall some girls, laughing gaily, were cooking rice in a frying-pan; flies buzzed around the oil stove. I went inside the rooms. Nearly all had plain whitewashed walls, all camp beds, a table, and a chair, maybe some kind of old wardrobe. The usual portraits of Lenin, Marx, Stalin, and family photographs looked down from the walls. Families with several children might have two rooms; single students had one. Sometimes an alcove was made to serve as a room. It did not look as if the student would get much solitude and peace. Involuntarily one thought of the Backs at Cambridge, green, sleepy quadrangles. I spoke to a girl. "Where do you come from?"

"From the country," she said. "My family are peasants. I am studying to be a chemical engineer. At harvest time I go back to the village to help my family."

"Are you better off now than before?"

She looked at me, astonished. "Without the Revolution I should never have left my village! I should never have learned even to read and write. I'd have married at fifteen like my mother, borne children, cooked and washed and worked in the fields all my life."

"And now?"

"Now I can learn something of what the universe holds!"

Until the abolition of restrictions on members of the old intelligentsia these and their children found it much harder to enter universities than the children of workers and peasants. The Soviet régime has, until recently, distrusted the old intellectuals. Not only were they passive, introspective, vacillating, unable to join in the militant activity of the Bolshevik; they turned away from reality always doubting.

But I stand alone between them,
In the roaring smoke and flame—
Both sides are dear, I pray for both . . . ³

Many of the old intelligentsia remained militantly or sullenly against the new régime. Some drifted into active counter-Revolution. Most were suspect.

Adolph, an alert clever young boy from White Russia, son of a doctor, wanted very much to study international politics. But he could not get a vacancy, even to enter as a student in that subject, so he was studying engineering instead. He wanted also to be a Comsomol.

"But for me it will be difficult," he said, "because I belong to the intelligentsia. Peasants' and workers' children are asked only a few simple questions. I would be asked many, and more difficult ones; I would have to show I understand and accept Marxist principles thoroughly." But though he could not be what he wanted to be, Adolph was not vengeful. "Historically the Bolsheviks are quite right," he said. "And they are doing a wonderful job. I am just as interested and just as anxious they should succeed as any Comsomol. All the same," he sighed, "I would like to be a professor of international politics. I know so much about foreign affairs."

However, as the Soviet régime continues, the intelligentsia become adapted. Many have become completely reconciled, so much so that in his now famous speech of June 23, 1931, ⁴ Stalin could remove all legal restrictions against the intelligentsia. In this speech he said:

The new state of affairs was bound to bring about, and has brought about, a new mental attitude on the part of the old bourgeois intelligentsia. Those who yesterday were wreckers are beginning in a number of factories and workshops to work hand in hand with the working class. . . . A large section of the old technical intelligentsia have now turned to the side of the Soviet power; the active wreckers have become few in number, and they have been isolated and obliged to go underground.

³ Maximilian Voloshin.

⁴ As Secretary-General of the Communist party Stalin occasionally lays down in speeches the policy the country is to follow, and therefore these speeches have great weight.

Now our policy toward them must be one of conciliation and solicitude. It would be wrong, dialectically incorrect, to continue our former policy. We must now boldly invite their co-operation.

This speech ushered in a new era for the Soviet brain worker.

The Soviets have to train their new intellectuals from the new class in power. "The working class must create its own technical and industrial intelligentsia. There has never been a governing class that has managed to get along without its own intelligentsia, there is no reason to believe that the working class of the USSR can," said Stalin. And the Bolshevik intellectual and professional man, the teacher, engineer, scientist, lawyer, diplomat, must be a kind of human being we hardly know. He must have the same qualities as the Bolshevik worker, but must combine the qualities of the man of action with those of the thinker. He must know theories, but not turn into a "mere" theorist; be able to practise impartial science but not become an impartial scientist only. "It is not any kind of highly trained personnel, of engineers and technicians, that we need," said Stalin. "We need such as are capable of understanding and absorbing the policy of the working class of our country, and who are prepared to carry it out conscientiously."

The new professors are trained in institutes of Red professors. The Communist Academy lays down the lines to be followed. Workers and peasants have already become Red professors, and it is no uncommon experience to be introduced to a man in a cap and without a shirt, or a girl in working clothes, as "Red Professor, Comrade So-and-So."

Besides the universities there are special institutes for training in the different professions. The Communist Institute of Journalists trains young men and women in the art of the new Soviet journalism, which is very different from journalism in other countries. ⁵ Gosizdat ⁶ (the State Publishing House) has a division to teach publishing and editing. The students are frequently men and women who have been worker-correspondents in village, coal mine, or wheatfield;

⁵ See Chapter XVIII.

⁶ The Gosizdat has been recently absorbed in the Ogiz, the Book and Magazine Publishing Combine.

editors of radio newspapers, Red Army newspapers ; and the best contributors to the wall newspapers. Magazines may invite those worker and peasant correspondents who have sent in good material to come to their offices and take a permanent office job, with courses for further training at the Communist Institute of Journalists.

The Foreign Office (Narcomindel) has special courses for the training of Soviet diplomats and consular officers. The new Soviet diplomats will have had a background different from that of the diplomats of other countries, yet they must be able to deal with those diplomats. So far, not many of the younger generation who have never known capitalist life have been appointed to high foreign diplomatic jobs. Mme. Kollontay, Chicherin, Krassin, Litvinov, Rakovsky, though early Revolutionaries, belonged originally to the middle classes, and were trained in history and languages and the usages of polite society. The new Soviet diplomat may have been a factory worker.

Thus, people who have never had the opportunity before are getting the chance of developing their intellectual talents. In the West an occasional workman rises to be boss of a factory, a slum child to be a successful movie actor or writer of popular songs. The occasions are rare enough to be noteworthy, and the person involved moves into a new social class. In the Soviet Union rank and file workers, recently unskilled ignorant peasants, have the opportunity of developing their intellects, their organising abilities, their literary and artistic talents, their creative gifts, without ceasing to be workers.

"Socialism will do more than wipe out capitalism," said Lenin. "Capitalism strangled the abilities and talents of millions of people. Under socialism these will develop and bloom."

CHAPTER VII WOMAN FREED

Woman will first attain justice . . . when . . . she builds the socialist state.

—ANATOL LUNACHARSKY

FOR THE first time in the history of the world, a country is abolishing all discrimination on the ground of sex between women and men.

Russian women in the past, except the women of the upper classes, were as unfree as women in the East. They belonged to their fathers till they belonged to a husband, to whom they were frequently sold. They had no title to land, little education, no separate passport ; they could not study at the universities nor enter professions. The way in which women were regarded in China as described in Pearl Buck's novel *The Good Earth* compares in many ways with the attitude to women in old Russia. Economically, legally, politically, socially, they were subordinate to men. They could not enjoy even the simplest biological functions of womanhood. Babies were brought into the world by unlicensed midwives, among the cockroaches and pumpkins on the stove or—since birth was unclean—outside in the shed. An American woman long resident in Russia has described the many disabilities women of all classes in old Russia suffered. The wife was obliged to follow the husband wherever he went. If a wife left her husband he could send the police to bring her home.

. . . The unfaithful wife could be put in jail . . . Divorce was available only to the very rich. It was a common occurrence for an innocent woman to be adjudged unfaithful by the court and have her

children taken from her. . . . On marriage all of a woman's property and money came under her husband's control. . . .

The peasant women grew old and ugly and ill-natured under the double burden of work and abuse. . . . You see them still, little girls of eight and nine, their child faces weirdly old. At the earliest possible moment they join the family in the fields at work. There was little romance or sentiment involved in peasant marriages.¹

Folk sayings and proverbs fill out the picture. "The woman's road—threshold to stove." . . . "A chicken is not a bird and a woman is not a person." . . . "Beat your wife for dinner and for supper too." . . . "Long hair, short sense." . . . "I thought I saw two people but it was only a man and his wife." . . . "For what reason should one educate a woman?"

Though middle and upper class women were not so badly treated, nor left so ignorant or uneducated, still life held little more spiritual freedom for them.

The girl of the upper classes was given a grounding in art, music, and poetry; she was supposed to know a great deal about books, nothing at all about life. Any possibilities for original thinking were strangled. . . . There was a flavour of indecency about going to college.²

Many examples of the old way of life are still to be found in present-day Russia. On a motor trip I visited many cottages in outlying villages; the women stood while the men sat down and ate; kept their heads bent and their hands folded, not speaking until they were spoken to. In one hut when I asked the peasant woman a question, the husband repeated it to his wife, the wife answered him, and he returned the answer to me. The baba did not talk to me directly the whole evening.

Many peasant women still worship icons and curse their Bolshevik or Red Army sons for turning on the faith of their fathers; and some are still beaten by their husbands. One peasant mother said that she was afraid her son-in-law did not love her daughter because he did not beat her. "I could not live if my man did not beat me," she said.

¹ Jessica Smith, *Woman in Soviet Russia*, 1927.

² *Ibid.*

In Siberia women were even of less account. In some of the Central Asian republics a woman does not exist as a person at all; she is an article of trade and pleasure. Her face is hidden behind a long horsehair veil and at home she is locked up in the harem. She is subject to the Shariat, the sacred law of Mohammed, and the common laws of the land, which decree that she has no right to study, speak in public, or agitate. She may marry at nine and be taken by force by her suitor. In parts of Central Asia some parents will kill their daughters rather than send them to school.³

It was not accident that made the Soviets deal with the woman question as a fundamental revolutionary task. Theoreticians of the movement had always realised its importance. Lunacharsky said: "Woman will first attain justice, will first be free and happy, when, in conjunction with men, she builds the socialist state. In this task labouring women must stand side by side with men."

Lenin expressed himself often and uncompromisingly on the subject:

The first dictatorship of the proletariat will be the pioneer in full social equality for women. It will radically destroy more prejudices than volumes of women's rights. Without millions of women with us we cannot exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Even bourgeois women came in for Lenin's sympathy:

We hate and want to wipe out everything that oppresses and tortures the woman worker, the wife of the workman, the peasant woman, the wife of the small *entrepreneur*, yes, even in some ways the wives of propertied classes. The rights and social measures which we demand for women in bourgeois society are proof that we understand and will take cognisance of the position and interests of women under the proletarian dictatorship. . . . Our demands are only the practical conclusions to be drawn from the burning need, the shameful humiliations of women who are treated as weak creatures without rights in the bourgeois order.⁴

Nevertheless the fight for the emancipation of woman must be carried on always in relationship to the general fight of

³ Egon Erwin Kisch, *Asien gründlich Verändert*, 1932.

⁴ Clara Zetkin, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, 1931.

the proletariat. Under a class system women are an oppressed and exploited minority like Negroes, children, Jews, national minorities. Only by throwing in their lot with the workers can they achieve the classless society in which they will be free and equal human beings. This is Marxian theory.

A feminist theory was that women must start their struggle for emancipation in the sphere of the family, of love and sex relations. Bourgeois society gave them no other foothold in society. "For women home was their world, while for men the whole world was home." When woman had won her place as an equal personality in the family she could then assert herself as an equal member of society. But after bourgeois women had won equal rights in the family they found that beyond family life there was a whole society which still remained closed to them. "Freed by their class from the humiliating tasks of housekeeping," says Paulina Vinogradskaya, "they found themselves turned not into creators and social workers, but into boudoir dolls, tools for the purpose of giving joy to men."

Working-class women had quite a different problem; they could not conquer their rights this way. Forced to enter factories early, they were emancipated early from their fathers, husbands, and lovers. Love and sex life was no separate and special problem for them. Marriage was not a commercial agreement; the working woman could choose her mate and in love be herself.

To make her right to love a reality the working woman must enforce her rights to a place in industry, her right to culture and a better life in general. This she could accomplish only by throwing off the yoke of capitalism. For working women the road to freedom lay in the struggle with society first, the family after. . . . So there was no united women's war against all men, but a struggle of working women, together with their men, against men and women of the bourgeois class.⁵

And the woman's movement since the Revolution has not been feminist. "We are not trying to set women against

⁵ Paulina Vinogradskaya, "Questions of Morals, Sex, Way of Life, and Comrade Kollontay," *Krasnaya Nov*, 1922. This is quoted further in the next chapter.

men," cried a peasant woman, "and we don't elect a woman to office because of her sex. We'd vote against a woman kulak⁶ as readily as against a man kulak." Dunya in the commune was furious because the boys wanted to elect her so as to have a girl on the committee. "If I'm not good enough as a human being, I won't go on the committee at all," she flung at them.

Immediately after the Revolution laws and decrees were passed in Russia giving women equal rights with men in every sphere, so that Lenin could justly say: "Nothing has remained with us in the Soviet Union of the inequality between man and woman before the law." But this did not give women immediate equality in fact. As Yaroslavsky remarked: "It is one thing to write good laws, and another to create the actual conditions to bring those laws into life. Only a radical reconstruction of our whole way of living will solve the problem." But a radical reconstruction of anything is the last thing to daunt a communist. Steps were taken at once to set up the economic bases for achieving equality.

One of the strongest agencies of oppression of women, say communists, is religion. Why are there always more women than men in church? "Because women have no time for study, they believe everything the priest tell them," says Krupskaya.⁷ She analyses the causes of the extraordinary hold the Church had over women:

Her lack of free time for education makes woman an easy prey to any superstitions. A woman told me a certain lecturer had spoken very well. I asked what he said. "Do you think I have enough leisure to remember what was spoken at that meeting?" she asked. "I had some washing to do." The monotony and drudgery of housework forces women to look for recreation near at hand; religious ceremonies provide this. A young peasant asked me whether I did not believe in God, the devil, or Holy Spirits, and when she heard my answer, "Oh," she said thoughtfully, "it must be very lonesome for you to live!" The church is thus a woman's recreation and refuge from loneliness also.

⁶ See footnote, p. 85.

⁷ N. C. Krupskaya, *Woman and Religion*, 1931. Not as yet translated into English.

Now therefore communists must furnish moral equivalents for all these cravings of woman which heretofore the Church satisfied. Art must be made more accessible. Mass concerts should be arranged, colourful pageants, parades and demonstrations. Dry propaganda does not make an emotional appeal.

Movies, theatres, puppet shows should be provided "to render the Church and its ceremonies superfluous to the working woman." Red christenings, marriages, and funerals, festivities and dances on Soviet holidays, will help take the place of the colourful saints' days and church holidays. These active equivalents take the place of church ceremonies to-day. Krupskaya relates how a travelling cinema came to a village on a Sunday. The church suddenly emptied and everybody rushed to the movie. "Was it religious feeling that had brought those people to church?" she asks, and answers, "No, merely a thirst for spectacle."

The oppression of woman by religion throughout the ages is illustrated in the Museum for the Emancipation of Woman in the Novo Devichy (New Virgins) Monastery outside Moscow. A walk through this picturesque old church to-day gives one a panoramic view of the history of woman, in photograph, poster, and slogan. It is a model of Russian propaganda. There are not many facts, but those that are told are repeated over and over, briefly, vividly.

The museum is worth describing. One of the most beautiful buildings in Moscow, it is surrounded by strongly fortified walls, and was meant originally to serve as a fort. The walls and towers have rich baroque decorations. The convent was founded in 1524 and became one of the richest in Russia. After the death of Czar Feodor Ivanovich in 1598 his wife Irene entered the convent as a nun; her brother Boris Godunov also retired there temporarily, to leave it as the new Czar. In 1689 Sophia, the Regent of Russia, was imprisoned there after her brother Peter had broken her power. Five hundred rebel Streltzi, her partisans, were hanged under the windows of her cloister on the order of Peter because of their part in the revolt against him. In 1922 the Soviet Government converted the convent into a museum.

Inside the convent walls stand the white five-domed Cathedral of the Smolensk Madonna, the gold of the domes glittering in the sun. The mural paintings and the altarpiece in the cathedral are the work of great painters of the seventeenth century. Alongside the cathedral stands the baroque Church of the Transfiguration of Christ, with its tall, slender belfry, one of the most beautiful in Russia.

Graves of historic families, names such as Bobrinsky, Troubetskoy, Golitzin, and of well-known artists and writers, strew the old cemetery. Chekhov, Tschaikowsky, Pisemsky, the historian Solovyev and his son the philosopher; Scriabin, the modernist composer, the anarchist Prince P. Kropotkin, the poet Briusov, and many famous actors of the Moscow stage lie here. Next to them one sees famous Revolutionary names. It was there that Nadya Alleluieva (Stalin's wife) was buried. Now some graves are being despoiled, the stone carried away to be used for building materials. The long low white nuns' houses have been turned into workers' apartments and the sound of children playing floats out through their doors and windows.

The museum is divided into two sections. The first, Woman and Religion, houses a collection of mementoes of the old days. Rich purple and gold embroideries the women used to stitch for the monastery, altarcloths, priests' robes, vestments. Icons, silverware, pewter, precious chests intricately and beautifully carved, bear witness to the occupation of women in those days.

On the walls hang records and photographs of the activities of sects that tortured themselves on earth to be saved in the hereafter, women who cut off their breasts, flagellated themselves, and so on. Political prisoners were brought to the monastery as a punishment for infringements of laws. Old documents state their misdeeds. Three women did not go to the holy sacrament and were put away for three months "to work, preach, obey, and fast." In 1794 a general's wife was incarcerated because she would not obey her husband; she remained for seven years. Others were fed on bread and water.

On one wall hangs a picture of a gross priest riding on

the back of a peasant woman and holding an icon on a pole before her face, which is distorted to look like a pig's snout. She is crawling on all fours while he laughs fatly. The title of the painting is : *Religion Is the Enemy of Woman*. There are illustrations of the various punishments for adultery—the worst sin in a society in which the husband's power over his wife was absolute.

Under paintings of women sitting at their benches embroidering runs the slogan : *This Is How They Spent Their Day*. Huge gold letters strung across the aisle of the church spell : *Religion Is the Enemy of the People*.

The church housing the Emancipation of Women division of the museum has an exhibition of copies of old paintings in the entrance hall. Above one showing the crowned Madonna and Child runs the legend : *With Prayers to the Czar of Heaven They Learn to Honour the Earthly Czars*. Below another of the richly crowned Christ on his throne, runs the inscription : *Christ on His Throne—an Exact Copy of a Byzantine Emperor*. Close by is a brightly coloured poster of drunken people playing the concertina, clinking glasses over grave-stones in a cemetery, making love across a table laden with food and wine. The poster reads : *Religious Holidays Were Necessary for the Exploiting Classes as a Means of Soothing the Masses*. Above a crucifix is printed : *Jesus Suffered and Told Us to Do Likewise : This Is What They Tell the People*.

Another poster all in red shows a girl with a rake over her shoulder. In the distance a line of tractors drives intently up a wheatfield ; in the bottom corner priest and kulak are indulging in an orgy. *In Our Kolhoz There Is No Place for the Priest and the Kulak*.

White marble stairs lead up to the museum door. At the top of the stairs a bronze bust of Lenin stands, and under it the legend : *Every Cook Should Learn to Govern Russia*. Near by under a picture of Krupskaya, *Make Way for Woman !* Photographs of well-known women Revolutionaries, women soldiers, generals, naval captains, and of battle scenes adorn the walls, and above a shelf of models of gas masks, military textbooks and weapons, first-aid books, and pictures of women shooting runs the slogan : *Working Women,*

Strengthen the Protection of Your Country. Aeroplane wings are strung across the ceiling and on one wall is pinned a large cross-section of a Red Cross aeroplane showing all its inner works.

Under the Bourgeois Régime the Least Rights of All Were Held by the Servant. A poorly dressed maid sits in a drab attic peeping through a door at the family dining. Models under glass cases portray self-centred women talking to their husbands while kerchiefed serving women stand humbly with heads bent in the doorway. Gentlemen on sofas leer out of old prints. *So you are here alone : send out for a bottle of beer !* they order the servant. Another picture left over from the old régime shows a girl talking to a soldier. The comment is : *You like to keep company with a soldier, and count it an honour when he chats with you, foolish one !*

Other sections show the actual old spinning, carding, and weaving machines, the difference between old and new forms of work. The women's hopeless faces lend colour to the slogan, *The Factory under Capitalism Enslaved Woman*.

And now—To-day. Charts showing health and strength, modern posters of factories and reapers and binders, up-to-date living-quarters, lines of women marching forward. Women busily fixing motors, gay and energetic tractor-drivers, smiling lathe-operators, militiawomen directing the traffic. A woman director of a silk-weaving factory, poised and self-assured, receives a report from a respectfully saluting Red Armyist. Strung across the walls run bright gold letters : *The Emancipation of Woman Was the Biggest Gain of the October Revolution. . . . The October Revolution Turned Woman Toward the Construction of the New Life*. And admonitions : *We Must Draw into Constructive Work Millions and Millions of Women*. And history : *Under the Direction of the Communist Party Woman Emerged from Slavery and Became a Conscious and Active Fighter for Her Rights and for All the Toilers of the World*. Photographs of girls in sports shorts at parades, at gymnastics, diving, racing, fencing, jumping.

And last, domestic and legal emancipation. Wrinkled skeletons of women, bending over washtubs ; laundry trucks hurrying from mechanised laundries. Scenes in the lawcourts

where *The Old Law Did Not Protect the Woman*, young girls were forced into loveless marriages with old men, women crossed themselves before the priests, vie with poster representations of ZAGS,⁸ the Soviet People's court, a husband dauntlessly paying his alimony, a Comsomol wedding. *The Enfranchised Emancipated Woman Has Become a Real Social Being.*

And childbirth and health and education. How the baby used to be born, in a dirty hut with a pig and chicken at the trough and an old midwife in attendance, and the way it is born now, in the clean bright hospital with the cheerful, scientific, antiseptic nurse. The new toys that Soviet babies should play with are pictured, the crèche and nursery school. *By Strengthening the Protection of Mothers and Children We Help the Working Women to Become Active Constructors of Socialism.*

Would any peasant woman's head not turn dizzy with such progress?

Soviet law provides equal pay for equal work. There is no difference in wages between men and women performing the same job. Women, however, as a group are chiefly in the lower-paid trades because until recently their lack of training compelled them to go into unskilled trades. But they are being trained in the skilled trades as fast as teachers and places in industrial schools permit. No woman is discriminated against in a job because she is married or because she may marry. The fear that a woman will give up her job when she marries does not enter Soviet calculations. "Sometimes a girl will marry and leave her job," the woman editor of *Rabotnitsa*, a Soviet woman's magazine, told me. "This of course is very bad—it is a habit inherited from her mother or grandmother. But most girls look forward to working all their lives, just as men do. As a matter of fact, our women were so long tied to their kettles that they are now greedy for outside work."

It is suggested that women would make good tram and bus drivers, lamplighters, postmen, street-cleaners, couriers,

⁸ The initials of the Russian name of a Bureau for the Registration of Marriage and Divorce. Every district has one.

ticket-inspectors, train conductors. At present these jobs are still mainly held by men. One sees women doing heavy work, however; they are active as bricklayers, plumbers, street workers, street-car conductors, punch-pressers, and in many industrial processes. On the farms they are enthusiastic tractor-drivers.

One method of protecting women in industry, and seeing at the same time that they get equal opportunity with men, has been to reserve certain industries or processes for them. Trades that demand accuracy, delicate handling of machinery, attention, concentration, conscientiousness, have been recommended for women by public proclamation.⁹

To draw women into industry is one of the immediate tasks in Russia. They can be reached more easily in the factories, detached from their traditional moorings of house-keeping and church, and taught to be members of society rather than of the individual family. Their health and education can be better looked after and political education more swiftly carried forward when they are citizens at work. Intensive propaganda is therefore carried on toward this end. Said an article in *Izvestia*:

Our aim is to draw 1,600,000 women into industry by 1932. Since 1921 the number of women employed has risen from 2,555,900 to 3,506,000, but the trade unions still do not pay enough attention to getting women into industry. And they are still largely in unskilled jobs—only 1.7 per cent women are in skilled jobs, whereas of men workers 11.3 per cent are skilled.

This is not because women do not work as well as men in industry. According to the general opinion women learn more quickly. Colonel Hugh Cooper, builder of the Dnieprostroy Dam, says women are more thorough and work better. Engineer Appleton of the automobile works at Gorki (late Nijni Novgorod) agrees. "Maybe it's because they're more conscientious," said Mr. Appleton, "or perhaps it's only because with their more delicate fingers girls can handle delicate machinery better. Or perhaps it's only because it's

⁹ *Trud (Labour)* for July 16, 1931, carries a complete list of these and also one of those suggested as unfit for women.

a greater novelty to them. Whatever the reason, I was astonished to see that they don't mind what they do or how dirty they get. I've seen them plunge their arms without the slightest hesitation into stuff they knew would stain them for weeks."

Hundreds of plants in the Soviet Union have shown the high productiveness of women's labour. At the Putilov works in Leningrad 1,600 out of 2,500 women workers are shock-brigaders. One shock brigade discovered that there is a higher proportionate attendance of women than men at industrial conferences.

Once women have been in industry those of them whose home life is still backward resent it. The *Izvestia* article continues :

After working at the factory, where the woman learns and builds on an equal footing with men, she comes home and encounters swearing, beating, drinking, and dirt. The new apartment is filthy, the books torn, there is dirty linen on the beds. Overcrowding, lack of comfort, foster family quarrels ; these again contribute to drunkenness.

So, the article concludes, clubs must be developed. There are about half a million women club members now. "Women must make their clubs real seed-plots of culture and new life. As yet they are not applying their organisatory household habits to club work in any great measure. And they don't bring home life into harmony with factory and club life. There is plenty of work for women !"

In the country also strenuous attempts are made to get women into the fields. Some women object. "Woman's place is not in the furrows," one remarked. It is sometimes hard at first to get them to leave their children in the crèches. The writer Sergei Tretyakov tells of women who put their children in the crèche and then tiptoed in at night and stole them away again. But when they see they are well treated and the children have advantages home cannot provide them with, they welcome the new institution.

"At first, with the Revolutionary desire to emancipate woman, a great point was made of putting women into

administrative positions to show they were being drawn into the Government. Now one seldom hears the phrase, 'We must have a woman too.' " It was grey-eyed, hard-working Nurina who said this. This woman worked for seven years in the Woman's Section of the Communist party, where other well-known feminists, Krupskaya, Lebedeva, Smedovich, Vinogradskaya, A. V. Artiukhina, and, some years ago, Alexandra Kollontay worked. Comrade Nurina was a teacher before 1917, fought in the army, and now works in the Commissariat of Justice.

At first many people objected to having women in the Government. A young peasant whose wife had just been made a member of the Central Executive Committee told with tears in his eyes that he would have to get divorced now, though he loved his wife dearly. "Now that she is a member of a ruling body, how can I scold her? And a husband must have the right to scold his wife!" he cried.

To-day one hears fewer such objections, and women are flocking into public life. A million and a half women took part in rural Soviet elections last year. In Uzbekistan, one of the most backward Far Eastern republics, the vice-president is a woman. Women work on advisory bodies attached to the ministries and in many of the commissariats. Fewer women have as yet attained high places in Soviet politics. Only seventy out of seven hundred members of the Central Executive Committee are women, while of the seventy or eighty members of the Central Committee of the Communist party none are women and three women only are candidates—Krupskaya, Collegina, a textile worker from Tver, and Nicoleva, a Leningrad working woman. But they are training themselves in the lesser positions and learning the work that will be required of them.

During the war a number of women were soldiers and officers. Some romantic stories are told of women officers. High officials in the present Soviet Government were at one time in the army. Comrade Bogat of the Ministry of Health was a lieutenant in the cavalry; Nurina served for three years during the civil war. In the army men learned great respect for women.

An article in *Za Zdorovui Buit* (1931) on "Women and Family Life" sums up the situation to date in Russian terms :

The worst inheritance of the past is the illiteracy of women and their lack of skilled labour. In the course of seven years, 250,000 women have eliminated their illiteracy, yet in 1926 we had only 34.4 per cent literate women. At present 26 per cent women in towns between the ages of sixteen and thirty-four are illiterate, 53.6 per cent in the country.

Red handkerchiefs adorning the heads of Comsomol, worker, and peasant women appear more and more frequently at workers' faculties, in technical schools and universities. In 1927 there were 31 per cent in universities, 44.8 per cent at workers' faculties. In the workers' faculties of industrial colleges 9 per cent are women, in industrial technical schools 13 per cent, in technical colleges 10 per cent. So far there are only the first detachments of women agriculturists, doctors, and engineers from the peasant and working class. Young women themselves are not active enough in gathering their forces to obtain actual equality of rights in this sphere.

Individual housekeeping is being undermined. Nursery schools, kindergartens, public dining-rooms, and laundries are carrying out the tasks women until now performed in their own households. Women are being freed from their homes. Mass education is giving them interests outside the home. The article asks :

What changes will take place in family life due to these economic changes ?

1. The number of housewives and women of indefinite occupation will diminish.
2. There will be an increase of the number of families with both husband and wife in the proletarian ranks.
3. More children will be brought up by communal institutions.
4. With the increase of wages for every family we may suppose a growth of the means of satisfying material and cultural demands.
5. For millions of women emancipation will become a fact ; they will take their place in the construction of socialism beside the mass of men and under the same conditions. . . . The woman's horizon will widen and her proletarian consciousness will be strengthened. Productive work will drive away consideration of little things, of the shortcomings and disillusionments of life, and will lessen family

quarrels. The family will have more interests in common. The whole family will be interested in productive themes, and there won't be the conflict there was between the individual interests of members of the same family. The school life of children will be more in harmony with family life, that is, there won't be the sharp division between school life and life at home.

Some Western observers contend that communism will destroy the home and family life. The last paragraph of the article answers this :

One cannot speak of the destruction of the family in 1931, rather of its enrichment. A woman will be an excellent worker, and also, with the help of kindergartens, she will be a better mother. Love between the sexes will grow because of the factual emancipation of the woman. She will be comrade and friend as well as wife and mother and the love of man for woman will be entwined with interests and desires in common.

Woman will have a good influence on those backward men who have not yet done away with the old life. The enlarging of family interests will do away with the tight close little family cell and "home interests" will be transferred to a wider circle of "collective interests." From this the new forms of social contact reflecting the new communal life will emerge, and new social relationships will be born.

Such sentiments may sound like pious and sentimental wishes only, but a great deal is being accomplished toward realising them. The attendance of preschool children at kindergartens and nurseries increased from half a million to three million in 1931, while the number of places in crèches grew in 1931 from seventy thousand to one hundred and seventy thousand. Similar figures in other fields lend justification to Ilin's prophecy that fifty years hence people will write about the present individualist methods of housekeeping as of some archaic and outworn custom.

A peasant woman of sixty-two spoke eloquently at a recent conference on the changes the Soviets had wrought :

Do not think that I am old. It is true that I am sixty-two, but I don't count the fifty years I lived under the Czar. What sort of

life was that? After fifty years I did not know how to read or write. Now under the Soviet Government I have learned to read. I cannot write, the pencil does not stay in my fingers. But I write to the newspapers. When I find something wrong, I dictate to my grandson and they print it in the newspaper. I have two small windows in my izba [hut] and I can see through them how socialism is being constructed in our country. I see mothers carrying their children to crèches in the village! I see separate beds and towels for children appearing in some izbas. Is not this a bit of living socialism?

The biggest revolution has come to woman in her personal life. No longer need she live in fear of her husband. The husband not yet rid of old prejudices may be furious at his wife for taking part in public life, as was the husband in Neverov's story "Marya the Bolshevik," but he cannot do much about it (unless it be to hide ignominiously under the bed as the husband did when Marya entertained the Commissar). The wife of to-day may refuse to bear her husband children year after year. "What can he do? If he should beat her, she might go away. And that's not all. She'd drag him to court and the Bolsheviks would certainly put him in the jug."

Amusing stories are told of the stolid muzhik, used to absolute possession of his wife, now having to face her freedom and her new powers. At the Eighth Soviet Congress it was proposed to include peasant women in the Soviets. There was a sudden uproar in the hall. A strong young peasant jumped on to the platform, knocked his fist on the table, and shouted: "I will not let my wife be taken into the Soviet! I have eight children. How can she go into the Soviet?" A large section of the congress noticeably sympathised with the man. This was in 1922. In 1927, at the Thirteenth Soviet Congress, a group of women delegates were discussing the nomination of a woman president of a village Soviet to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The woman's husband, a social worker in his village, declared:

"I'll have to divorce my wife."

"Why?"

"What if I have to 'teach my wife reason' [the Russian

phrase for beat] and she in the Government?" One of the woman delegates proposed the anxious peasant challenge his wife's candidature. "What! Do you want me to expose myself to general mockery? How can I oppose my wife's election? I should be called an advocate of serfdom, I, a social worker. How could I ever go back to my village?"

On one occasion the women of a village, resentful of their ill-treatment by their menfolk, collected in the schoolhouse and refused to come out and attend to cows, pigs, or children until the men signed a paper promising not to beat them, call them names, or subject them to any other humiliations. First incredulous, then unwillingly, sheepishly, the men signed. "Forty years I've lived under the sun," cried one, "and nothing like this has ever happened!"

In the East the fight against women's emancipation takes more tragic forms. Powerful male relatives and masters have taken violent revenge on their womenfolk. Removal of the veil has been made the political issue of emancipation and women have been tortured and shot for uncovering their faces. The author Boris Pilnyak relates:

One of my comrades spent the night in a hill village. During the night he heard the voice of a woman. At first it seemed as if she were singing some melancholy song. Then he remembered that the women lament over the dying. Suddenly there was noise and confusion; then the village slept again. In the morning a Tadjik came to the village Soviet and announced that he had killed his wife in the night because she had removed her horsehair veil.

In a Tadjik theatre two women of a troupe were killed, one by a relative, who hacked her to pieces, the other by a jealous husband because on the stage she kissed another man.

Kulaks in European Russia frequently behaved almost as savagely to women who took part in public affairs. A woman delegate from Tver to the Fourteenth Soviet Congress told how peasants reviled her in the street. "Ah! My respects to the Baba Commissar! How do you do, Domnushka [a term of contempt]? There will be a decree telling men and women to bear children in turn. Ha-ha, why do you turn tail, you cholera?" After a year's successful work, the peasants'

attitude toward this woman changed. She reported to the Congress that now she enjoys full respect.

Such cases could be multiplied endlessly. I talked to a buxom woman worker in a candy factory. "I was a servant," she said, "and was beaten by my master. My mistress said I was no good for anything because I was clumsy and broke dishes. I slept in a tiny foul attic with no windows. Nothing I did was right. I ran away to this factory."

"And in her first month she packed eight times as many boxes of candy as any other woman in the department," said her foreman proudly. "We made her a shock-brigade worker, and she has set a standard for the others."

"And last week I was elected a member of the Moscow Soviet," added the woman shyly, "and I used to believe my mistress when she said I was no good for anything!"

The new sexual morality has helped complete woman's emancipation. The heroine of Panteleimon Romanov's "Letters from a Woman" in *Without Cherry Blossom* describes a wife's feelings, why it was necessary in the past to lie and deceive her husband, her lover, herself.

Even the most free-thinking woman is generally so crushed by the unwritten moral law that she is afraid to admit to herself her real feelings.

This continuous division of the stream of life into the allowed and the not-allowed leads to a woman's representing in herself one huge lie. She expresses not her own personality but some other approved by public opinion and the opinion of her husband.

Eventually the real and active life in a woman dies.

Women have had only a "mutual life," no life of their own. And I do not want the virtues of bygone days, however beautiful. I do not want married life if it doesn't give me "life"; I do not want to purchase the blessings of family life at the cost of my freedom. I want to have the means whereby to live.

Servants, peasants, household drudges, housewives, are now girl judges, editors of newspapers, foremen, radio engineers, Red Army officers—citizens. And where they are lathe-operators, bus conductors, textile workers, tractor-drivers, or unskilled workers, they are still independent, self-respecting, proud, the equal of any man.

At the Treugolnik rubber plant in Leningrad I ran across a girl of twenty-two, dressed in a shiny blue serge skirt, a worn jumper, a red kerchief over her head. She was head of her shop and was to be made a Red section director the next year. She was working sixteen hours a day, taking extra courses that she might fill the post well. Tired, white-faced, looking older than her age, she yet glowed with energy and plans. She was married and had a child in the factory nursery. "I'm afraid many of our women still find their happiness in staying home," she said. "We must make a yet more determined drive to get them into the factories. No woman should sit at home any more. No woman should be missing—this!"

CHAPTER VIII

LOVE MUST BE CHANGED

"Somehow love must be changed. . . ."

—DASHA, in Gladkov's *Cement*

THE PROBLEMS encountered by the Revolution on the "domestic front," among the new marital relationships, are infinitely more perplexing and intricate than those met with on the economic front. One can plan and carry out the plan when dealing with coal, iron, transport; one can plan to change one's thinking and feeling and find the plan does not work at all.

Since the traditional attitude toward marriage and sexual relationships is to be broken down, many kinds of experiment have been tried. Sex morals have gone through many stages in the last fifteen years. At present there is a strong tendency toward "puritan" morality (though not for puritan reasons). In the periodic party purges men may be expelled for private behaviour as well as for political acts. Frivolity, excessive promiscuity, libertinism, rape (which some courts have interpreted to cover several marriages in quick succession), seduction, perversions if practised with children, are condemned—not because moral laws are broken, but because such behaviour betrays the social purposes of the Revolution. Lenin said to Clara Zetkin:

Certainly thirst must be satisfied, but does a normal person, under normal conditions, lie in the street and drink from mud puddles? Or even from a glass that dozens of other people have been drinking from? . . .

I don't want for a moment to preach asceticism. Communism must bring the joy of life and vigour. Youth needs healthy sport,

swimming, excursions, physical training of all kinds, a variety of mental interests—study, investigation, scientific research. A sound mind in a sound body. We want neither monks nor Don Juans, nor yet the German Philistine, as the happy medium.

You know our young Comrade X—, a fine, highly gifted youth. I am afraid that in spite of that, nothing good will come of him. He jumps from one love affair to another. That doesn't go either for the political struggle or for the Revolution. . . . The Revolution demands concentration, the straining of all energies by the masses and the individual. . . . The proletarian belongs to an advancing class. He doesn't need intoxication to deaden or arouse him, intoxication by sexual intemperance or by alcohol—he needs clarity.

But forgive me, Clara. . . . My alarm forced me to speak. Our future generation disturbs me deeply. They are a part of the Revolution. And if the evil manifestations of bourgeois society begin to appear in the revolutionary world—as the widely flowering roots of certain weeds—then it is better to take measures against them in time.¹

Thus Lenin, as do other Russian leaders, approached the question of sex from the viewpoint of social consequences. Much of what seems almost license to tourists in Russia is only a result of the very simple, frank, and earthy attitude Russians always have taken toward sex. For generations before the Revolution men and women travelled together in the same compartment on trains. Men and women sleep together in the same room or in the open, dress and undress together unconcernedly, bathe naked, go to meetings and discussions and public trials where sex matters are discussed with great frankness. In some parts of Russia the traditional form of courtship, thousands of years old, is for boy and girl to sleep together in the barn or cowshed for some weeks, the girl remaining virgin. In some villages it is a gesture of courtesy, as it was in classical Greece, for the daughter of the household to bathe an honoured male guest.

An American engineer encountered this custom in an outlying village. The beautiful twenty-two-year-old daughter of his host led him to a cement-floored outhouse, stripped first him and then herself, and in spite of his protests doused

¹ Clara Zetkin, *op. cit.* This passage is translated from the German original.

him thoroughly with alternate jugs of hot and cold water. "It was the best bath I ever had," he said. "She wouldn't let me even soap myself. Afterwards, when I came out, there before the door stood her father! He shook hands with me cordially, and hoped that Tanya had done her job well. Her father, mind you!"

Russians, as Maurice Hindus has pointed out, are different from Western people in that Russia was never deluged by the alternate waves of chivalry and puritanism that swept over Anglo-Saxon countries.² They have neither censorship nor legislation such as the American Mann Acts. Sex "stimulation" of the kind we are used to seeing in talkies, Broadway night clubs, cabarets, is absent in Russian life. There are only two night clubs in Moscow, and those are dull. No peddlers of forbidden pictures wander the streets; no posters of semi-nude girls plaster theatres, movie houses, and hoardings. Newspapers report no private scandals, nor even news of engagements, marriages, and divorces. There is little gossip about people's private lives. The wives of great men are not in the public news. Many American visitors ask about such wives but few Russians can give any information. They are not interested. It took a particularly enterprising young foreign correspondent to locate Nadya Alleluieva at work in an artificial-silk factory. When she died in November 1932, the Western world was amazed that no reference was made in the Russian press to the fact that she was Citizeness Stalin, although her husband wrote the in memoriam of "this fine Bolshevik woman."

One story will illustrate the general Russian attitude toward sex. An American woman correspondent wanted sex stories for her newspapers. She went the rounds of the institutions in Moscow. In the prophylactorium former prostitutes sat at long tables in unattractive cotton frocks and cotton stockings, learning a trade; they reported that they preferred their present to their past lives. She looked for gypsies; they were prohibited because they represented the bad, bourgeois days. She looked over the benches under the Kremlin walls and found a policeman shooing away a couple

² Maurice Hindus, *Humanity Uprooted*, 1929.

because they were becoming too intimate. Finally she asked a Russian: "Where in this country of yours can I find out something about sex?" "Sex?" answered the wondering Communist. "Sex? Ah, you mean the Institute of Mother and Child?"

One day in his compartment on a railway train a member of an American party kissed his wife; at that instant the porter opened the door of the wagon-lit. The American was fined 25 roubles, "and it would be 50," said the indignant official, "if the lady were not your wife." There is a law against intimacy on trains and boats and other places where men and women must travel together, and this law had been violated.

These facts have not always been so, even since the Revolution. The first few years after 1917 every kind of liberty and license were taken. In fact in some circles for a girl to be unwilling to share her bed with any chance young man showed "bourgeois class prejudice." And that was worse than being a "poor sport." There was so little time in those hectic days, when a man might be at home one day and dead the next; men and women had to snatch what pleasures they could. The beautiful dark-eyed Genia in Mme. Kollontay's novelette *Love in Three Generations* sums up the attitude held by many girls then as it was during the war in other countries.

"You are surprised that I live with men, not waiting to fall in love with them? . . . I have read many novels, and know how much time and strength it takes to be in love. . . . But when in these past years has there been leisure for us? Always haste—always other things to fill our thoughts. If you are attracted to someone he is called to the front, or to another city—or you are so busy yourself that you forget—what harm to cherish the few minutes that may mean a little happiness to you both?"

But then came civil war and famine, reconstruction and the Five Year Plan and limitless propaganda to the youth to conserve its strength for social purposes. There was less time for leisure and dalliance, more and more work to do. As

~~the~~ strength of the social idea grew, so did the ideal of monogamous marriage.

The changes wrought by the Bolsheviks in marriage laws and customs bring urgently to the surface the question: What is marriage?

At first some hotheads wanted to abolish all state interference in private relationships. But the new state's interest in the child forbade this. So it was decided to retain the form of civil marriage until the new society had defined its ideas on marriage. But life had already determined practice. It was found that in the restless days of Revolution about a quarter of a million young people had actually married without benefit of registration or civil ceremony; they could not now be denied the legal privileges of marriage.

And there were other problems. Money, which had been abolished during the years of War Communism, was reintroduced under the New Economic Policy, and property conditions changed so rapidly that all sorts of confusions arose. Since a husband could technically claim all money or property accumulated by joint work, it might happen that a divorced woman received no compensation at all. Some laws about the adoption of children also proved unworkable. A few of the faulty provisions were corrected by court decisions, some by special decree, but it was all clumsy and confusing. By 1925 matters had become so involved that a new Marriage Law for the Soviet Union was proposed and drawn up. An American resident in the Soviet Union at the time has described vividly the consternation of learned Old Bolsheviks as well as of illiterate muzhiks at the frank recognition of realities in the new code.³ Its most important changes were: the legalisation of *de facto* marriages; the provision for joint ownership of property accumulated during marriage; and the payment of alimony to a divorced wife by a whole peasant household if the husband alone was too poor to pay it. These sections were called by some a "sanctioning of polygamy and depravity." Vituperation grew so heated

³ Jessica Smith, *Woman in Soviet Russia*, 1927. This little book is the best account by an eyewitness of the changing of the new Soviet morality in the early days of the Revolution.

and bitter that the Commissar of Justice suggested that the proposed law be submitted to mass discussion. And discussions went on for a whole year.

The proposed law went to the country. Newspapers and magazines were full of it. Hundreds of brochures were displayed in bookshop windows . . . setting forth the new draft in full, with the arguments on both sides. The backers of the law . . . set about proving the respectability of unregistered marriages. . . . In addition to the flood of printed matter, there were . . . meetings, lectures, debates, and discussions. Few laws in the history of the world have been so widely discussed. . . . Krylenko . . . said: "We did not expect such disputes. The original law was aimed mostly against church marriages. . . . We do not consider that registration will be necessary in a socialist society under conditions of economic equality. We preserve it now as a means to something rather than as something valuable in itself."⁴

At the end of a year no decision had been reached, so the framers of the draft decided to leave the question of what marriage is to the decision of the courts. And to-day law-courts, officials of ZAGS, and advisory committees in domestic affairs are still constantly confronted with the question of the conception of actual marriage. A newspaper recently published a letter from a reader asserting that "our Soviet law recognises as marriage every actual living together with all its consequences." The paper answers (1930):

Absolutely not. By no means is every actual living together recognised by Soviet law as marriage, and by no means does every actual living together give rights to the consequences connected with marriage. . . .

Take the case of B, who sued the engineer X for paternity of her child and alimony. . . . He testified in court that he was not only an engineer but also a "poet and writer." As poet and writer he needed to make a study of a Philistine type in B. He made a study of her. In nine months she had a child. X testified in court that from such sexual relations as he did not deny had existed between them it was impossible that a child could be born. However, one

⁴ *Ibid.*

was born. And a number of witnesses and statements, especially statements of the defendant himself, convinced the court that . . . X was the father. He was ordered to pay alimony. "The study of a Philistine type" cost him eighteen years' alimony.

But we are not here concerned with this aspect of the case. B and X met during a period of one or two months, perhaps more. They had sexual relations. They actually cohabited. Was this marriage?

Could B, in addition to demanding support for her child from X, claim also his property, claim to be his heir, ask alimony of him as his wife? What elements were lacking in the cohabitation of B and X which differentiated their relationship from a legal marriage? There was no working union, no working cell. Not one of the signs that are recognised in Statute 12 of our code as constituting actual marriage was present in their case.

Under Statute 12 of the Marriage Code, living together constitutes actual marriage under the following conditions:

When a couple live in the same place, keep house together, act like married people in the presence of third persons, write to each other mutually as if they were husband and wife, sign documents together, give each other mutual material support, and bring up their children together.

Another case illustrates what is actual marriage:

Citizen T asks the court to put out his "temporary lodger" Citizeness X. He asserts that he permitted her to come to live with him out of pity for her desperate situation, taking the precaution to get her to sign a paper saying that she was only a temporary lodger. It turned out that when she came to live with him she was already pregnant, through one F. T himself had been a witness in the trial and had done everything possible to establish the paternity of F (the child had to have a father). But now he asks the court to put out his "temporary lodger" as he cannot endure the child's crying, the washing hanging about, etc.

X testifies in court that T took her to his house on condition that she would "be his wife." As she had been abandoned by F, the father of her coming child, and chased out of her lodgings by the landlady, she consented . . . and agreed to live with T as his wife in return for the right to share his lodgings. And having agreed, she had been an attentive and industrious wife.

Witnesses testified to the fact that T and X kept house together, and conducted themselves in the presence of third parties as man and wife. T even celebrated a kind of wedding.

The court recognised this as an actual marriage.

In the early days of the Revolution there was great discussion about morals and marriage. Trotsky wrote on *Problems of Life*, Preobrazhensky on *Morals and the Working Class*, Lunacharsky, Yaroslavsky, Arnold Soltz, and many other Revolutionary leaders speculated and debated. Sophia Nikolaevna Smedovich, a member of the Central Control Commission and a devoted worker for the emancipation of women, wrote a number of articles and pamphlets on the sexual life of the modern generation. Alexandra Kollontay wrote both fiction and articles. In her book *Red Love* (called in Russian *The Love of the Worker Bee*), she took the extreme position that all relationships were permissible, whether for the sake of raising a family or for "mere" pleasure. The "winged Eros" had his rights too, she said.

She was bitterly attacked by many Party members. Smedovich said Kollontay was advocating prostitution; so did Professor Zalkind of Sverdlov University, who put forward twelve rules of conduct for young people, advising the opposite pole of conduct from Kollontay's. They were:

1. No early development of sex life among the proletariat.
2. Complete continence before marriage, and marriage only under conditions of full sociological and physiological maturity.
3. Marriage only between people planning a long common life, between people fitted in every respect for joint creative effort.
4. The sexual act only as the consummation of deep, complete sympathy and attachment to the beloved object.
5. The sexual act should not be frequent.
6. Love must be monogamous; there should be constancy rather than variety. The philosophy of Genia [Kollontay's heroine] is a sickness, not a class idea.
7. The possibility of childbirth must be remembered in every sexual act. Birth control and abortions are both harmful.
8. In love relations there must be no element of flirting, courting, coquetry, and other methods of special sex conquest.

9. Sexual selection must be along lines of Revolutionary expediency. Physical attraction is a relic of barbarism ; class worthiness, and the purely eugenic question of the Revolutionary Communist cleansing of humanity through posterity, must be the only considerations in the choice of the beloved.

10. There must be no jealousy . . . if supplanted by a worse man, prove your superiority, if by a better, give way.

11. There must be no sexual perversion.

12. Sex must be entirely subservient to class, interfering in no way and serving in all things.

Such opinions are considered by many too extreme and are not popularly supported. They show the puritanism to which some Communists lean.

Paulina Vinogradskaya answered Kollontay in the exhaustive stinging article already referred to in *Krasnaya Nov* (1922) called "Questions of Morals, Sex, Mode of Life, and Comrade Kollontay." Comrade Vinogradskaya is more mellow to-day and accounts for Kollontay's "preoccupation with sex" (which she flays bitterly in the article) by the conditions of her early life. Kollontay was the daughter of a general and her first marriage to a man of high military rank was unhappy. The Revolution won her personal freedom.

Comrade Vinogradskaya deplores the fact that Kollontay devotes so much space to the subject of sex love, because the impression will be gained that that is all that occupies the minds of "the toiling youth." True, on their return from the front, from the restless war years, many were anxious to settle down. They came to a new socialist world and, fearful of betraying its ideals, they asked everyone what kind of private lives communists ought to lead? They should have been given sound advice. And all Kollontay did in her "Letters to Young Workers" was talk of the pleasures of gilded love—Eros unwinged, Eros plucked, timid Eros. "Never once does she mention the natural consequences of those Eroses—children. Never once does she deal with the real problem, how to combine harmoniously work and social and personal life." Kollontay's approach to the whole sex problem, says Vinogradskaya, is a bourgeois and feminist

approach. She asserts that love comes first and will determine everything else ; but in a proletarian society this is not so. Since the beginning of the Five Year Plan such discussions have become much less frequent. Many of the problems have settled themselves.

Russia has been called a dour grey country in matters of love and romance, a country of "love locked out." It is said there is no time for lovemaking, that flattery and coquetry are too frivolous, as fox-trotting is too bourgeois.

Visitors to the Soviet Union, however, find that Russians are natural about their sex lives ; they admit and take into account the biological and physiological basis of sex. The Western poetic ideal of romantic love, the tortures and delights, "sighs and tears and pale wanderings," have little appeal for the Bolshevik. If two comrades are in love, they go to the home of one of them. If there is no child and either finds the association unsatisfactory, they part. It is really a nation-wide system of companionate marriage.

The serious girl does not give herself easily to a man. I knew one extreme case of a girl who had lived in the utmost intimacy with a young man for two years, seen him every day, had all her meals with him, spent the evenings with him, and often slept in the same room ; but they had not had sexual relations. "If we fall in love we will," she told me. "At present we are merely comrades."

It is true that there is less time for lovemaking in these hard-working days, and that some women are unhappy and vengeful about it. A fresh young girl married to a draughtsman in a factory laughed bitterly. "When I complained the other day about his lack of attention my husband said he must devote his attention to the Plan, not to lovemaking. You'd think we were machines, too. It would serve them right if we all up and left them."

"It might serve some of them right," said an older woman. "Look how the older men are leaving their wives and taking up with young girls now that they've got a chance. They'd have never dared do that in the old days. They want their fling before it's too late."

A woman textile worker gave another side. "All I want

when I get home is to be allowed to sleep," she said. "I rarely get back from social work till twelve, and have to start my shift at the factory again at seven."

The official Communist position is that both romantic love and sex stimulation have been overemphasised in other countries, as they were in pre-revolutionary Russia. "The culture of the exploiting class attached far too much importance to the sex element of human life. They spent far more energy on it and gave it far more attention than the biological organism demands," said one authority, and added the usual communist interpretation that this was due to the "monstrous conditions under capitalism."

The possible social importance of individual emotions is stressed in all Soviet pronouncements.

"Is marriage a private relation between two-legged animals that interests only themselves and in which society has no right to meddle?" wrote Ryazanov, a Communist. "We should teach young communists that marriage is not a personal act, but an act of deep social significance."

"Marriage has two sides, the intimate side and the social," said Soltz, "and we must never forget the social side. We are against a profligate or disorderly life because it affects the children. We wouldn't mix in a man's affairs if he changed his wife every third day, if his children and his work did not suffer from that. When we talk of love we have always to remember that sex relations imply not only a physiological relationship." This is the burden of every Communist argument. More than through Party decrees, teachings, books and pamphlets, the stabilisation of sexual relations is sought through the child.

At this particular period in the history of the Revolution man's energies are to be directed to work. As Lenin quoted: "Even old Solomon said, 'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.'" Practice, not theory, is answering many of the questions young Bolsheviks ask about morals and private life. "Morals grow out of living conditions and the way of life," Yaroslavsky said.

The Bolsheviks are themselves intensely interested to see what new private relationships and moral forms will develop,

and send out many questionnaires to find out what is happening. A book published in 1922 condensed the answers of some thousands of Communist students. They were all young people who had taken part in the Revolution. A student of twenty-one writes:

Can we speak already of a new morality and equal rights of women? In my opinion, no. I, for instance, would like to meet a woman, a new woman, who would feel the equal of a man and not express peculiarly "women's demands"; who would not demand, for instance, that the man support her.

I am rather well read, I have met many women, I read Bebel [author of *Woman and Socialism*] and Kollontay; I have talked to many people and observed the lives of many Communists. Some friends of mine married women of Kollontay's type. Dear me! Within a few months I received letters from them; they were unhappy or had already parted. They were caught up to the ears in family matters and their work suffered. Some weak Communists become narrow citizens because of these women. I don't believe the new woman has been born yet, and she won't be for a generation.

A worker-student of twenty-two writes:

Sex is a natural need. Women have too many moral inhibitions. That's why men go to prostitutes and get diseased. If we have special institutions for the consequences of sexual intercourse, called lying-in homes, why can't we have special houses for sexual intercourse itself? (Of course I don't mean brothels.) Such houses could be organised so that a person who wants to satisfy his sexual urge comes, is registered, examined by the doctors, and then receives permission.

Needless to say, this proposal, made during the chaotic concepts following the civil war, was not taken seriously.

Women have many of the same problems as elsewhere. These are some of the women's answers:

Sexual life interferes with social life. Sometimes I feel the sexual urge very strongly but I am afraid to satisfy it; then there is a decrease in my capacity for work, I feel hostile toward people, and pessimistic. [19 years old.]

My marriage increased my interest in social life. Sexual life plays

a very important rôle. It completes social life, develops and enriches it. [26 years.]

My husband demands too much attention and my work suffers. I think I'll have to get a divorce because of that.

In my opinion sexual life impedes all revolutionary women in their work. It is impossible to combine them. It's tedious to have abortions, but if you don't you'll have to give up your work. Sometimes it is necessary to suppress our instincts.

Many more such answers lead the editor of this collection of answers to remark :

So we see that sex often impedes woman's participation in social life, and we meet among women with much social-psychological disharmony.

Then there were questionnaires on what kind of sexual life the young communist thinks ideal.

We asked the men and women about their ideals of sexual life. How would they want it if they could create it consciously according to their wishes? The majority (82.6 per cent of the men and 90.5 per cent of the women) hold as their ideal a sex relationship based on spiritual closeness, on love. Secretly they long for it. But at the same time they want a form of relationship that shall suppress their own personality as little as possible. About half the men and 67 per cent of the women want long-duration love unions, and 21.4 per cent of the men and 14.3 per cent of the women are ready to consider marriage as the highest form of sex relationships.

A considerable minority thought short love relationships the highest form of relation between the sexes. Some look only for satisfaction of the sexual urge ; others declared they would like all their sexual life based on the usage of prostitution. The editor comments :

Between these extremes youth wanders. Most, however, do want unions based on love and mental intimacy, and think such unions should end only when love ends.

One worker of twenty-two writes :

I consider man has developed far from his biological ancestors and marriage is the most suitable answer to his intimate demands

and his moral development. The basis of this marriage must be love, hygiene, culture, and physiology. Any other kind of relationship is the result of something else—the old slave position of man in modern society. Polygamy and prostitution both for money and without money must disappear completely in the future, and divorce will be rare and natural.⁵

With their eager desire to break with old forms and their fervour for the Revolution and the new, Communists are sometimes pushed into supporting strange attitudes. Paulina Vinogradskaya says :

In the attempt to solve the problem of many-sided love, we find a man living simultaneously with two women, with one because he loves her soul, with the other because he loves her body. We know of men living with two or three women, and vice versa, without any display of jealousy. Of course to be rid of jealousy is already a big step forward and from that point of view such relationships may be considered progress.

But she adds that they probably take up too much time. She gives an illustration of a German Communist who loved his wife so much that he hated to leave her and refused to go on *commandirovka*s.⁶

His comrades, wishing to give him a lesson in the new morals, told him that love of many women would destroy his love for the one and he wouldn't mind going on these trips. Their explanations attained their end.

But the patient, unfortunately, fell in love with nine women at a time, who all lived in different towns, and now when sent to the provinces he goes with pleasure, not to one alone, but to all nine.

Such examples are a *reductio ad absurdum* of the attempts

⁵ L. Hellmann, *The Sexual Life of Modern Youth*, 1922. Not translated into English.

⁶ Missions in the service of the organisation for which a person works. Although these missions include all kinds of work from making arrangements for the collection of refuse to important political work, the person on a *commandirovka* is regarded in somewhat the same light as the person on a government mission elsewhere.

to hew out a new way of life ; they are told in Russian publications to show to what lengths muddled people will go to prove the letter of rules whose spirit they do not always understand. And it should be borne in mind that many statements made in the early 1920's would not be made now. During War Communism conditions were chaotic, life uncertain. Young people especially found personal relationships more difficult to order than they did later on, under the Five Year Plan, when there was more stability and security.

In the actual marriages of the Soviet Union to-day one sees many of the same problems that have agitated modern youth in other countries, with some allowance for different conditions.

Irina Pavlovna told me her story.

She was twenty when the war broke out, a student in a dramatic school, and married (unregistered). She wanted to "keep her independence" and earn her own living, so she decided to keep her own room. "The two of us together in one small room would have been unbearable ; love wouldn't have lasted long." The husband, however, wanted to live with his wife, to have children, to bear the same name as his wife. "If you won't take my name let me at least take yours," he begged. She refused. "He was a member of the Party," said Irina, "and I wasn't, yet he was so much more conservative than I. He wanted me to give up my work, he said he earned enough for us both. But I wouldn't." Finally Irina found it impossible to work and keep up the conflict with her husband at the same time, so she left him.

Another girl, also an actress, was married for eight years to an actor whose love she did not return. He was greatly interested in her career ; she divorced him, however, and married a clerk in a government office, who was jealous of her being an actress and made her give up her work. "I'm very happy with my husband, but I miss my work," she said.

In a questionnaire sent out early in the Revolution, students were asked what they thought was wrong with modern marriage, what made men and women incompatible. Some of their answers illustrate eternal problems between the sexes, others mirror the temporary conditions.

I divorced my wife twice because she had hysterical epilepsy. And because we were incompatible. But now I live with her again because I pity her. I consider that as far as the family exists the man will remain a slave. Political and economic slavery for the man are as nothing to family oppression. Our trouble is that the economic situation lags behind.

I live very badly with my wife but I can't divorce her because I am chained hand and foot by children. And divorce is also not ethical because every divorce is accompanied by thunder and lightning. I prefer to live quietly with a desirable woman. It's bad to have a wife and children and another woman simultaneously and I feel guilty. But to have only a wife doesn't satisfy me ; to have another woman as well makes a scandal in the family.

From a social and hygienic point of view monogamy is best. It is the best guarantee against venereal diseases. While the state does not bring up the children, this guarantees to the baby the mother's breast and upbringing. Yet monogamy and steady ideal love are rather the ideals than the facts of our life to-day.

I asked a sociologist at the Institute of Social Hygiene why there were no records of such questionnaires among students now.

"We haven't had time to bother about questions of personal life since we've been building the Five Year Plan," he said. "There are fewer problems now ; young people find it easier to settle their lives ; there is enough security for them to have children, and children give stability to life."

It will be seen that Soviet Russia has reaffirmed with modifications adapted to new social conditions certain ways of human relationships long sanctioned by human experience. But they have a new validity now because the need for them has been re-experienced. Bolsheviks refuse to do anything just because it has been done in the past. Behaviour is less regulated by taboo and tradition, more by rational common sense. Just as at first it was thought to be bourgeois to be clean, neat, and punctual, and afterwards it was found that these were good proletarian virtues too, so certain old moral rules have come to be accepted afresh, but on a rational basis. The religious attitude to morals and sex has been shattered and with it the domination of the Church. The

frankness of attitude of the Bolshevik is an accompaniment of this new rationality. But the biggest change in the old attitudes has been wrought by the changed position of women.

A woman does not have to choose between marriage and a career in the Soviet Union ; the economic conditions make it possible for her to have both. Among Comsomols it is not only no slur for a wife to be working, it is the done thing. The modern young Russian does not cherish the ideal of being able to support his family himself. That pride has died. Nevertheless, the bourgeois prejudice of wanting a wife at home still exists. In Gladkov's novel *Cement* the hero, Gleb, manages to start a factory again against tremendous odds, but he cannot rebuild his smashed private life. He is a Communist but he expects his wife Dasha to be the old-fashioned wife, mother, and cook. This, it must be warned, was in 1923. Fewer men would want that now.

Many old emotions survive, but the attitude toward them is changing. Jealousy still exists, aplenty ; but it is regarded as an "atavistic" emotion. Communists are not proud of it ; they do not deny its existence, but they consider it reactionary and unbecoming to a Bolshevik.

"When I found my wife had gone away with another man," said a Communist, "I wanted to shoot them both. I was frenzied. I rushed to a comrade and begged him : 'Hold me, don't let me go, don't let me get at them.' We are still jealous, you see ; we are not real communists yet in this respect ; we cannot rid ourselves of old feelings so quickly. But my little boy won't be jealous any more. They are brought up differently now." "Nowadays it is one of the worst crimes to kill a woman for jealousy," said another Communist, "because we are trying to free our women, not regard them as the property of men any more. If a man kills his wife or lover out of jealousy, he is given the maximum penalty—ten years—and in Central Asia he is shot. They wish to teach that jealousy is bad."

Most of the difficulties put in the way of young persons marrying in other countries have been abolished in Soviet Russia. Financial considerations do not exist : There is no

question of having a sum saved with which "to set up house-keeping." This phrase in the Soviet Union means merely the girl's moving into the man's room or vice versa. Differences of race, religion, nationality, social grouping, rarely bar a marriage. No loveless marriages are entered into for the sake of a title or prestige, any more than they are for moral reasons or to get away from the hated tyranny of a family. Parents do not hold the purse strings and their consent is not required.

Since property, racial, religious, and other of the traditional qualifications for the marriage partner have been abolished, there is practically freedom of sexual selection. Girls and boys usually meet their partner in an organisation or office—in one government department it was found that a hundred couples were married ; or they meet doing the same social work, in a rest house on vacation, or at committee meetings. On the collective farms it will probably be collective farmers who will intermarry.

It may happen, since work is so important to the young Soviet citizen, that marriages will occur more and more in the same locality. Husbands and wives will not in future be torn apart so much as they were during the days of civil war and Revolution. The state is making drastic modifications of its earlier policy of disregarding personal ties. It is recognised that a man may do his job as well if not better if his wife is along.

A pamphlet explaining the new marriage law to Russians says :

According to Soviet Law no member of the family may be enslaved. In Czarist Russia the power of the parents was unlimited and they often crushed the will of the children and forced them to enter into marriage. In the Soviet Republics the marriage relation is entirely voluntary. Conflicts where the parents try in the old-fashioned way to force their will on the young people in the matter of marriage usually end in victory for the young people.

In one village a young peasant orphan girl, Levashova, married against the wishes of her guardians, her aunt and uncle. A child was born. After its birth her aunt and uncle drove the girl away from home because she had chosen a husband for herself against

their wishes. Levashova took the case to court and asked for a division of the family property. The court decision was in her favour. She received three fifths of the land, buildings, and household goods, one each for herself, her husband, and her child.

Parents, relatives, or guardians have no right to prevent a marriage or to persecute persons who marry against their wishes.

Many parents have had a hard time adjusting to this new state of affairs. In Shishkov's short story "Cranes," written in 1926, the peasant girl Tanya begs her husband :

"Andrei . . . why don't you marry me in the real way? Let's go to the altar."

"Oh, this religion, faith . . . I can't. You just read the papers."

The father Grigori comes in and upbraids him :

"One can find husbands as rotten as you are everywhere. . . . You are only trying to find a way out for yourself, devil. You spoiled the girl, and . . ."

"She is not a girl. She is my wife. Read the decree."

"Go to with your decree! Decree! It's none of your peasant's business to know decrees. Have you no conscience at all?"

And Tanya says :

"Why are you angry, Father? Andrei wants to live with me. It's you who won't let him."

"And I never will! A fine business! They registered in secret with some dark clerk or other. To hell with your devil's marriage! Go to Andrei's house, in civil marriage."

The grandmother also attacks her :

"A girl's honour hangs on a hair, and once you lose it you can't hold it with a rope."

To-day some peasant girls will not live with their men unregistered, because it may be harder to collect alimony from an unregistered husband. The peasant girl Motja in the apartment in which I stayed was very anxious to get married, but none of the peasant boys working as house-builders

around, who were courting her, wanted to register. "I'd be a fool," she said. "Afterwards, when I get my baby, and they leave town, what'll I do then? No, no, I won't let any of them have me without registering." Peasants prefer registering also because they like to feel "something has happened," that a marriage has taken place.

Young Communists do not suffer from these traditional inhibitions. Their pride lies in marrying another Communist. There is nearly always a touch of pride in a girl's voice when she tells you her husband is a Party member. If he is not, she may try to get him to join. A young girl working in Electrozavod, the big electric factory in Moscow, came to supper one day looking very dejected. I asked why.

"I'm going to finish with my man," she said. "I can't go on any longer with him."

"What's happened?"

"Well, I never really was happy. I never loved him."

"Why did you marry him, then?"

"I was very young, and I'd just come in from the country, and he pestered me to marry him. Being a Party man and very intelligent, he could persuade much better than I could object. When he suggested I try marrying him, assuring me love would come afterwards, I agreed. But the love never came. And now I care for some one else."

"And he doesn't want to let you go?"

"No, his pride has suffered because he didn't win me in these two years." She brightened, blushed. "I'm in love with Jura, a young man at the factory. He's twenty-three and good-looking and intelligent, and he has such cussed courage! He's not a Comsomol, but he is so popular, has so much influence with the men, is such a good worker."

"Do you mind his not being a Party member?"

"He's not one yet," she smiled, "but I'll make him one. He did come on one of our Comsomol picnics. After he'd listened to them talk, he said he'd enjoyed it very much. I know I can make Jura a Comsomol," she claimed proudly.

"And is he in love with you?"

"He came to the picnic because of me. I'm pretty sure that in four days—we have the same day free—he'll ask me to

go into the country with him." That seemed to settle it for her. I asked what would happen then.

"We'll live together and see how it works. I don't want a family."

"You mean children?"

"Oh, no; I do want children. Children aren't a family. I mean I won't have Jura live with me in my room. I've only one room, and I don't want to wash and cook and darn for him. Of course I don't mind if he comes in the evening and washes up his plate and cup; but I don't want him to be there always. I want it to be a fresh conquest each time. I don't want him ever to come home and take me for granted as my husband has for two years."

I asked a Communist whether, now that equality of the sexes had been established, girls court boys as much as vice versa.

"Often there's no courtship necessary," he answered. "When they see they like each other as comrades they take all the rest for granted. One just moves his things into the room of the other and the first intimation their friends have of a marriage is that they find them living together. Girls do court men, of course, but as in other countries, subtly. Senka would not let Ivan know openly that she loved him; she'd court him by means of intellectual conversations, by discussions of political matters, so that he'd respect her first as an intelligent woman, a good companion and comrade, just as the girl in *Red Love* won her man."

One evening at a party the conversation turned to the kind of man girls wanted to marry. "Whom do you like to be seen with? What kind of person satisfies your vanity?"

"Oh," cried Galia, a fair-haired student of seventeen, "we like to go with Communists best! Not only because they are Party members; it's more because they have an assurance, almost an arrogance, that others don't. They feel superior and show it. You know how down-at-heel the former people are now; how they slink around like beaten dogs. We couldn't stand that in a mate. I would not go with my Vassily if he didn't have that Party assurance; if he didn't always hold his head high."

"Does that count for more than good looks or fame?"

"I've often seen a girl prefer the less good-looking man if he understands things better or is more intelligent or can do things. Don't you remember Shura's pride the other night when Petya fixed the fuse, and how she beamed and said, 'Oh, Petya can do anything!' But we don't mind their being good-looking!" Men and women both are proud of the work their mates do. They extol the achievements of their husbands, wives, and sweethearts, not their looks or clothes or dancing ability or social connections.

Then the conversation turned to what kind of a girl a man prefers.

"Well," spoke up Grigori, "our more serious men, especially men around thirty, often prefer women older than themselves. Many of my friends are married to older women. Except if they're both Comsomols. They marry girls of their own age because the Comsomol girl has the same outlook as the boy. But we Russians have always cared for intelligent women companions, and they are usually older. You know how we like to lie in bed and talk!"

Friendship and mutuality of interests mean more in the relationships of Soviet men and women than physical attraction or sexual passion alone. Alexandra Mikhailovna told me she was jealous of her friend Tanya, not because Tanya also was fond of Sergei, but because Shura was afraid she was fonder of him than of herself. She was jealous of her friend's friendship, not of her love. Lydia, a charming young movie actress, told me she was jealous of her lover. "But I'm jealous for his soul," she said. "I don't mind if he's unfaithful physically; that can happen to any one and doesn't mean very much. I want the soul of a man to be mine, his ideas, thoughts, conversation. I mind if he gives those to some one else." And indeed, beautiful and courted as she was, Lydia remained faithful to her lover, although he was away a great deal. She stayed the night with other men sometimes, but that, she said, meant nothing. "Hygiene demands that."

I asked numbers of young Communists what they expected of their wives while they were away on missions. "If I'm away for or six months I don't expect my wife to stay alone

all that time," said a young engineer. "I don't know that I want to hear about what she has been doing when I get back, but I could not expect her to live a single life all that time, any more than I would myself." The single standard seems to have become established among young Communists.

One is often asked by foreigners whether there are many illicit relationships. The answer must be the famous "Yes—and no." There are out-of-family relationships. But they do not correspond to the Western conception of "illicit." In P. Romanov's fascinating little story "Black Fritters" the peasant wife who discovered that her husband, living in the city, had begun to live with another woman, in a fury of jealousy decided to go to town and denounce the girl. "Let people see that he was a scoundrel and a cad. . . . She would break the window panes with her bare hands, so there might be blood. . . . She would tear the other woman's hair out." She comes to the city and finds her husband. He is delighted to see her, placid, unperturbed. This is how he breaks the news to her, when they are sitting alone in his room drinking tea.

"Katiushka, I did not write to you because that would not have meant anything. I do not live alone but with a comrade. A fine, honest girl. . . . I never chased after women, the thing came about honestly. That is all. . . ."

When one is asked about love and marriage, morals and sex, courtship and romance, in modern Russia, and the questioner obviously expects tales heavy-laden with immorality and vice and abuses, and instead a hundred stories come into one's mind filled with this kind of simplicity, one is tempted to say with Andrei, "That is all. . . ."

CHAPTER IX

INSTEAD OF THE FAMILY—WHAT?

"And I very distinctly felt that I had finished with the tyranny of the family over the individual. I have another larger family now, the human family."
—SONYA, in "The Big Family"
(Without Cherry Blossom)

"THE FAMILY is not such a vital educational influence as it once was," said an educator, "and we do not believe that it should come first in our considerations. Our children are not only members of a family unit; they are members of a classroom, a school, a Pioneer or Comsomol group, a community. And these, not the family, should play the vital and predominant rôle in training and shaping them."

Communist leaders have foreseen the break-up of the family, though they do not state what will come in its place. They are certain only that the old bourgeois family as the basic social unit no longer corresponds to the needs of modern society and they point to the breakdown of the family in capitalist countries in support of this idea. To abolish the characteristics of bourgeois morality—lack of freedom of women, difficulty of divorce, marriage for economic purposes, illegitimacy of children, the prohibition of abortions—was an obvious necessity; but then to build . . . what? As Trotsky commented in 1925:

Family relations are being shattered. Some big process is going on, very chaotic, assuming alternately morbid or revolting, ridiculous or tragic forms; but they have not yet had the time to disclose their hidden possibilities.

Lunacharsky, ex-Commissar of Education, denied that

communists were setting out deliberately to abolish the family, though he did say, "We hate the bourgeois family," But he went on:

From this the conclusion must not be drawn that men in the Revolutionary movement should not have families, nor the women bear children. . . . The main kernel of society is the family. Whether in future there will be a free family without a head, or whether the family will break up entirely, we do not decide in advance.

The main traditional props of the family as an institution, private property and religion, are being swept away; most members of families find their social activities outside the home in club, trade union, children's playground, sports field, palace of culture, Young Communist organisations. Rarely do you hear a Comsomol refer to the wishes or authority of his or her family.

Trotsky asserts that the development of personality is necessary for the evolution of a new type of family. He does not think communism and individualism antagonistic; he considers them different social forces mutually attractive and completing each other. A new and free family is what he looks forward to. He gives numerous examples of causes of family break-ups in Russia. The husband, seeing a broader outlook by having been mobilised into the Red Army, comes home to find everything practically unchanged. The old harmony and understanding vanish. Or the husband is a Communist who lives an active life engaged in social work, but doesn't want his wife to be in public life. And yet when such a wife, obedient, does not participate in his activities or interests, he may follow the instructions of the Communist cell and take down the ikons hanging in the house so that he cuts away the basis of the wife's old personal life but gives her nothing in its place. Naturally the wife is outraged and their relations break.

There are opposite cases too of husbands willing to be devoted to family and home, whose wives coming into touch with the new world neglect their families. The husband becomes irritated by his wife's negligence, the wife hurt by his lack of understanding; long years of family life may be shattered.

Yaroslavsky writes about such cases in a somewhat different tone:

It may happen that a man, having come to power, deserts an old Party working woman with whom he lived for many years, deserts her for a dressed doll. We don't deal with such a situation by moralising; we consider what the attitude of the working masses would be. They would disapprove of such behaviour and rightly so, because in this case we see no serious attempt to create a new family, but only a satisfaction of the sexual urge.¹

The ease of marriage and divorce has helped to break up the traditional family. Divorce in the Soviet Union is free, uncomplicated, and takes as little time as marriage—about twenty minutes. Anyone can get a divorce for the asking; only one party need want it. If both parties want the divorce the matter does not go to a lawcourt at all, but to the ZAGS.

At first there were many divorces, because all the couples who had been unhappily married and had been hopeless and helpless about it wanted to have their chains broken. Now that the development of Soviet economy has given people greater economic security, monogamous marriage is taking strong hold (also because it makes of the couple better, more serene workers). Divorces are rarer again. But no difficulties are put in the way. Occasionally the clerk at the registry office may look or say something a little reproachful if a young girl comes in to contract her fourth or sixth marriage; but he has no power to stop it.

As in other countries, it was the World War that first started the disintegration of marriage. For years men were away from their wives. As one peasant wrote:

During those years I lived with many women; I mated from necessity, not from love. Having to wander from place to place in the best years of my youth, to be on several fronts—how can one speak of love and steadiness? We merely satisfied human needs. I wanted to love but the conditions were not such that one could.

The conceptions and attitudes of millions of women deprived of their husbands changed. Women became more

¹ Emelyan Yaroslavsky, *Party Ethics*, 1924, chapter on "Unhealthy Deviations." Not as yet translated into English.

independent; their horizons widened, their psychology changed. Many began to work and take men's places; to understand what place they had occupied in relation to the family. They protested against old family and marriage relations. The proportion between men and women changed in Russia; in 1926 there were five million more women than men. "And of course this cannot be good for the institution of monogamy."²

Soltz declared that monogamous marriage for its own sake is not the Soviet ideal but "when marrying one should first think of the children. For them it is better to stay with one father and one mother." However, even that is only temporary, to his mind. He looks forward to a time when the state will be rich enough to look after all children and mothers will have no particular fondness for their own offspring nor children for their flesh and blood parents. Family feeling will have been transformed into social feeling.

Alimony laws are stringent and may have something to do with keeping Soviet citizens from frequent divorce. A father has to support his child, whether by a registered or unregistered marriage, until it is eighteen years old. If the mother has work she may have to contribute also. The court decides who shall have the custody. Alimony laws have been changed frequently as abuses have crept in and conditions changed. At first a father had to pay a third of his income; it was found that some women abused this by begetting a child by a richer man in order to claim alimony and live on it with the man they loved, or having relations with several men so that all had to share in the support of the child. I expressed my indignation to a Communist about this. "Yes," she said, "it's true some women abuse men in this matter; but think of the centuries women have been abused!"

About this condition Soltz remarked: "Our laws say 'up to one third of the father's wages,' which means that one third should have been the maximum. But judges did not discriminate and were allocating one third in all cases. I protested against such a mechanical approach to this

² Gurevich and Grosser, *Problems of Sexual Life*, Chapter 9. Not as yet translated into English.

question, arguing that it was all right when there was one wife and one child; but where there were more children—five, six, seven (we are not Parisians and in general have many children)—the 'alimony' child was in a privileged position compared to the others. There are also cases when there are two or three wives and each one has children; why should these children be in a worse position? If a man pays to each of his three wives one third of his wages, there would be nothing left for himself, and most likely such a man would run away, so I said judges must approach such cases with common sense."

The law has been changed now so that the husband has to pay a percentage of his income to be determined by the court, not a flat rate.

Innumerable anecdotes and jokes are told in the Soviet Union about these alimony laws. Two girls had been rooming together, when one was sent to another town and a man was assigned by the Housing Commission to her half of the room. In due course the girl had a child; and she brought the man into court to pay alimony. "Not at all," claimed the unwitting father. "It is true that this is my child, but I did not marry the girl. I am not in love with her. I did not ask to be sent to this room. The Housing Commission assigned me to it, and what else could they expect? I consider the Housing Commission ought to support the child." And so the court ruled.

A man comes to the court and is asked to pay alimony to his wife, a third of his income.

"I can't. I'm already paying that to a wife."

"Well, you must pay a second third."

"I can't. I'm already paying that too."

"Well, then you must pay a third third."

"I can't. I'm paying that too."

"What do you mean? You are paying all your wages to former wives? Then what are you living on?"

"I'm living on the alimony my wife is getting from five other men."

A girl was asking for alimony, and claimed a certain man to be the father of her child. Five comrades of the man, hoping to get their friend off, told the court:

"She can't know that this man is the father of her child. We have all slept with her."

"So?" replies the court. "Then you will all five share in the support of the child."

A number of parents suffer from ignorance. Newspapers print articles about the pathetic plight of "young fathers."

Early in November of this year [1930] there stood before the people's court in Chamovnichesky district a young worker Comsomol who with difficulty controlled his emotions and with sobs in his voice informed the court: "Before you pronounce sentence on me, before I am condemned to punishment for eighteen years, hear what I have to say. I am not to blame. Only once did I have sex relations with this socially dangerous citizeness. How is it possible that she should become pregnant from this one time? And is it possible that for this one time I must pay for eighteen years?"

Such problems constantly come to the People's Courts. The paper comments:

Over and over again, we hear "one time" . . . "eighteen years old" . . . "I am not to blame." . . . We don't claim it means a loose or immoral life, or any especial sex laxness on the part of these young fathers; we should not blame them. But after the damage is done it's too late for these hysterical shrieks of "one time." . . . They must be taught in time. There should be more propaganda and teaching relative to birth control.

"Our entire moral structure would tumble about our heads," Dr. Sigmund Freud is reported to have said once, "if a safe contraceptive were invented." In Soviet Russia this desideratum has not yet been achieved, but one effect that Dr. Freud may have been thinking of has; namely, that sexual relations should not necessarily mean children or if children do result, they should not affect the moral standing of the mother. Legal abortion and the abolition of illegitimacy have brought about this result.

Nevertheless, all is not well on the contraceptive front. Though information can be obtained at all clinics and consultation centres, the materials available are scant, insufficient, and of inferior quality. Lack of facilities and crowded rooming conditions have contributed to a much less

wide-spread use of them than was hoped for when the legal and social prohibitions were removed. Their use is spreading quickly, however. In 1927 the value of the monthly sale of contraceptives in Moscow was 250 roubles; in 1928, 1,700 roubles; in 1931, 100,000 roubles; and it was expected that in 1932 this sum would be doubled. In spite of this, abortions are increasing, doubtless partly because the death rate of babies has fallen very much (it has halved since the Revolution and is lower in Moscow than in any other capital), partly because peasant girls are shy and do not easily consult doctors before marriage.

The following reasons for the use of contraceptives were given in a questionnaire sent to housewives in Moscow:

	Percentage
Economic reasons	58
Desire to be free	11
Æsthetic reasons	6
Fear of losing health	4
Fear of infecting children	3
Other reasons	18

The conditions under which abortions are performed are well enough. No anesthetics are used, but the operation takes only about three minutes and the woman stops in the clinic five days. If she works, she is given three weeks off from her work on full pay. Everything is clean and antiseptic and the fear of infection that affects women in Europe and America is almost nonexistent. The death rate in 1931 was one in twenty-six thousand in Russia, whereas in Germany and the United States it is said to be ten times as high, though obviously statistics are unobtainable. At first abortions were free but now a small charge is made. Clinics are crowded; if a woman cannot get a bed she may go to a doctor privately, provided she first obtains a licence.

Nevertheless, dissatisfaction with abortions is growing among Russian women. A young teacher of thirty who had just had her fourth abortion told me that as soon as Russian women get together, they discuss abortions as other women discuss meals or clothes. There is a widespread idea that the

operation makes a woman look old, that she grows either fat or thin, that her face becomes wrinkled and loses its charm. Despite this, some women have had twenty and more. Physicians are not agreed as to whether repeated operations are harmful, but many discourage them. They are advised only where health or overcrowded housing conditions make more children very undesirable. Women are always strongly urged to bear their first child. Many Russian women like large families, and frequently girls of twenty-five or -six have already four or five children.

It is in the moral sphere that the legalisation of abortions has most affected woman. "Just as we do not marry for money or any such unethical reason," said one, "so we need not any more marry a man because a baby is coming." Illegitimacy has disappeared—the fact, the conception, and the stain.

The family is changing because the new society is taking over certain functions of the family and performing them better than the old family did. A married couple is not necessarily a social unit, as in the West, where it is hardly "done" in polite society to invite a husband or wife alone. A woman told me of one acquaintance who had known both her and her husband well for ten years, but had not known they were married to each other. Russian wives do not go everywhere with their husbands. They have separate clubs, they go to women's meetings, they may take separate vacations. Since the one day in five off has superseded the universal Sunday of rest, and husbands and wives do not always have the same free day, it may be that wives do not see enough of their husbands, rather than too much.

A continual irritant to family life lies in the crowded housing conditions. A large family living in one or two rooms finds it difficult, in the Soviet Union as elsewhere, not to quarrel. Housing conditions, indeed, coupled with the division of people into groups by ages, have contributed as much as any factor to the alteration of the status of the family. A new attitude is growing in communes. "When you go to the communal dining-room you can forget your family cares," said a worker, "and you don't feel lonely. It's gay; there are lots of people and you are lifted out of yourself."

"Quite new relationships are developing in the communal house," said a sociologist. "No theory could have foreseen them; life and practice have determined them. If a child is born it belongs to the whole commune; the commune adopts it. A sense of belonging [*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*] is being developed in the commune such as formerly existed only among members of a family." Members of a commune are called communards. Kolya, a boy member of a commune, writes:

Each family lives not in its own little world, but in the joys and sorrows of the whole commune. Whether we like it or not the whole old set-up is breaking down. Even old people are beginning to come into the commune, and they feel quite differently than they used to. . . .

Of course there are "deviations" even in communal life. Some men are still very promiscuous. One commune wants to throw such a man out, another to find out why sex plays such a large part in his life, why he can't become more interested in social work and the questions of the day.³

"The fact that in the commune boys and girls work, study, and play together gives them a good chance of getting acquainted," said another communard. "At first there were two dangers: that simplicity would develop into primitiveness and that friendly relations would turn into Don Juanism. Both these dangers have been weathered. The strong comradeships that develop lessen the chance of light sex relationships. In the eight months of the existence of our commune there have been two weddings, if one may so express oneself, both of which have turned out well."

Youth communes are very particular about behaviour. Some model principles were drawn up for them by the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. One read:

The commune utterly condemns ephemeral sexual connections and an unbridled sex life. The only solution of the sexual question is a firm and lasting marriage built on love and such marriage can result only from reciprocal friendship, closeness of soul, and mutual interests.

³ "Toward the New Life," from the Notes of Communard K. Za Zdorovui Buit, 1931.

The home has been regarded by Soviet theorists as one of the most insidious of the institutions that foster individualism. It ties the woman, aggravates the greed for money and private possessions, fosters ideals of self-interest, is opposed to society. The story "The Big Family" in *Without Cherry Blossom* contrasts the ideals of the individual family and its attitude to an illegitimate baby with the Soviet attitude. Sonya, a young student, has gone to her village to have her baby. She waves to an old friend on the street but the friend turns away with "a queer and unpleasant grimace."

"Do you know that grimace, and what it means? When someone gives you that sort of look, you seem to shrivel up to nothing," Sonya tells her mother. The mother looks as if someone had hit her with a chopper. "Such off-scourings!" she says. "Do what you like with it, but don't shame me."

"I felt I had neither home nor family after my mother's words. My own mother had gone back on me!" Sonya returns to Moscow, to her student dormitory, and tells her friends. "But what are you crying about? Isn't it great?" cries Tanya, and rushes out to tell the other students. And they all crowd around and "look as if something new and significant had happened for their own personal lives."

"And I very distinctly felt," says the girl student, "that I had finished with the tyranny of the family over the individual, that obscure dirty tyranny . . . and it was somewhat of a novelty for me. I have another larger family now, the human family."

To substitute a new community sense for the old family kin and clan feelings is particularly hard, because family sense was very strong in old Russia. This may explain why some impatient Communists wanted to take extreme steps to "liquidate" the sense of belonging of blood relations. Many doctrinaires actually advocated complete separation of parents and children. One pamphlet states:

One of the first results of the socialisation of our education must be that children shall not live with their parents. From the moment of birth they are to be put in special children's homes in order to

remove them as far as possible from the harmful influence of parents and family. We ought to have special children's towns.

And children's towns were seriously considered by the Town Planning Institute for a time. But there has been strenuous opposition to the proposal. Krupskaya expressed the feeling of many when she wrote:

Parental feelings cannot be suppressed, even if they may take new forms and be led into other channels. Men and women workers are right to refuse to give their children to children's towns. Socialistic education must be organised so that parents and teachers both can take part in it.

A writer who had had much experience in communes upheld Lenin's widow. "She is right," he wrote. "Even in communes the parents don't want their children to be brought up in separate homes, but want them close by. But," he states in his very next sentence, "we haven't yet solved the question whether a communard has the right to take his child with him when he leaves the commune. Later, when every one lives in communes, this problem won't arise. Meanwhile, since communes are only small islands of socialised life we shall probably have to allow communards this right."

Some observers of modern Russian life believe that parents and children will not be separated, that the tendencies to do so will weaken and vanish. Nevertheless a number of progressive Communist parents do send their children to special Pioneer children's homes and camps, and see as little of them as the American family that sends its boys and girls to boarding-school in winter and a boys' or girls' camp in summer sees of theirs.

Arnold Soltz expresses the evolutionary point of view distinctive of Soviet culture:

Of course we don't want children to be taken away from their parents by force. We have nothing yet that can adequately replace parents. Had we more and better crèches, busy mothers might be glad to intrust their children to the state. What we are concentrating on at present is to give every child a collective education. Parental feelings will weaken in time, as will the feeling of belonging to an

individual family. The child will develop feelings of love and of belonging to a wider group. If I consider every one my brother I will not have especially strong feelings for my blood brother. I also believe that some day women will be broad-minded enough to feel no difference between educating their own child or some one else's.

Krupskaya also speaks of the development of a "collective woman," capable of feeling affection for any child, of winning any child's confidence, of sacrificing herself for any child.

At present family bonds are still strong. Russians have a deep affection for their children. At a social gathering of Russian Foreign Office officials and newspaper men every official told some story of his own tots, while the wives sat on the sofa and laughed indulgently. Communists who may ruthlessly shoot a speculator or exile a kulak will smile sentimentally as they watch children at play.

Children are not pushed off into a corner as a nuisance, a bother, something "to be seen and not heard," even when they are very young. The children's very names illustrate the parents' attitude. Ardent Communists christen their babies Comintern (Third International), Profintern (Red Trade Union International), Revmir (World Revolution), Diamata (Dialectics of Materialism), or Piatiletka (Five Year Plan). Then when Amnesty and Spartacus come home and spread Marxian doctrines and warnings against any letting up in speed to achieve the Five Year Plan, parents beam with pride and joy, and feel, justly, that the whole family is dedicated to the high purpose of the Revolution. An amusing illustration of changing conditions in the USSR is the child whose parents enthusiastically named him Lentrozin for Lenin, Trotsky, and Zinoviev. Trotsky is one of the worst renegades and now Zinoviev has been exiled. Only the first syllable of the boy's name is good Communism now.

Communist civilisation may be able to adapt family feeling to a wider and different group. It is a matter of transferring, not abolishing.

CHAPTER X FRANK SEX TEACHING

We communists have to face facts . . . we can't behave like ostriches.

—ZA ZDOROVUI BUIT

TEACHING, teaching, teaching. The Soviet's job is to enlighten everybody about everything as fast as possible; in the Soviet Union the work of enlightenment never ceases. As much ignorance and superstition existed about sex matters as about sanitation, germs, or astronomy. The Revolution has small patience with superstitions. Communists say that the former ruling classes kept the lower classes in sexual ignorance, tolerated and even encouraged superstitions, because a timid, passively fatalist population is more easily exploited than an enlightened one.

Sex education, like other Soviet education, is for adults as much as for children; the deafest peasant is to-day getting the benefits of the latest modern conclusions on sexual science. Sexual education, again like other education, is directed toward turning out a healthy, well-adjusted, normally functioning citizen. A person suffering sexual maladjustment, fears, anxiety, self-accusation, suspicions, a person unsatisfied by or over-occupied with his sex life, will be less useful in his Revolutionary work.

Sexual information is spread by every propaganda device, particularly the more dramatic ones—puppet shows, movies, plays, travelling exhibits, radio speeches, and public trials, as well as by lectures, books, pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers. There is no censorship of sexual teaching; no straightforward scientific accounts of physiological processes, however frank, are barred as obscene. Public trials

for sexual offences are particularly welcomed by the authorities because they give an opportunity to people in outlying districts to ask questions and gather information. Doctors and nurses are usually present at such trials, which are attended with all publicity possible, just to answer questions. I was present at the trial of a man accused of infecting his wife with a venereal disease. A baby had been born blind, and later died; the mother, discovering the nature of her illness, had drowned herself. The details, symptoms, and effects of the disease were freely discussed in the evidence; a continual stream of little slips of paper passed up to the doctor-judge's table. Some questions were answered then and there, others when the proceedings were over. The witnesses were cross-examined with the obvious purpose of bringing out the physiological facts; the punishment of the husband was not important. He was sentenced by popular show of hands to a year's deprivation of freedom—to be spent at the clinic getting cured.

Posters are used by millions to spread sexual propaganda. Venereal diseases were widely prevalent among the masses; little was popularly known about them or done to cure them. Now in every rest house, recreation centre, library, dining-hall, and anti-religious museum hang charts, diagrams, and slogans representing pictorially the symptoms of the disease and its ravages.

I saw in one of the majestic country houses of the old aristocracy, turned into a rest house for the proletariat, a magnificent dance room devoted to such a pathological exhibit. The heavy crystal chandelier still hung from the frescoed ceiling; delicate inlaid tables and cabinets that once held jewelled snuff-boxes now displayed wax models of parts of the human body. Bas-reliefs of spotted faces stood out from the plaques on the walls. At the top of the staircase stood a huge bronze statue of Lenin, arm outstretched, finger pointing to the slogan: *All Culture for the Masses*.

If one were to study carefully all the models and information displayed in public places, one might know almost as much as a medical student. Certainly the models of foetuses preserved in alcohol and exhibited in the mother and child

clinics, the cross-sections of the female frame, tell the prospective Soviet mother, illiterate peasant though she may be, more about the process of gestation than most college graduates in other countries know.

Protect the Human Mother, reads one poster. It shows a kerchiefed peasant woman carrying a heavy load of wood and a pail, another woman loading hay on a cart. Below, a pregnant cow and horse are being solicitously tended by a muzhik and his baba. "The peasant," explains the poster, "cares for his pregnant mare or cow, but cares not for his pregnant wife. Relieve the pregnant woman of hard work, let her not lift heavy loads. It is dangerous for the mother and for the child." *Before You Leave the Registration Bureau Go and Consult a Doctor*, urges another poster, showing on one side a careful couple, just registered, who did so, and who bore two healthy children and earned a bright, clean home with fruit on the table; and on the other a careless couple "storming upstairs to mate without precaution" (in the words of *Fortune*) who drew as their lot disease, no children, and a "bleak and barren home." In ZAGS itself hangs a notice: *To the Future Wife and Mother: Don't forget before registering your marriage to consult a woman doctor and get information on sex hygiene, contraception, and the future child*.

Rules of health contained in any textbook on the care of the expectant mother and the early months of a baby's life form texts for these didactic posters. The expectant mother must take exercise—she is seen doing so; she must visit the clinic regularly; she must prepare this kind of bassinet and these kinds of clothes; she must not wear high heels; she must not take too violent exercise; she must eat fruit and vegetables. Series of such posters called the Minimum of Health Series are sold in mother and child, sanitation, or medical-poster shops—stores that sell nothing else. A set comprises almost complete courses in elementary biology, anatomy, physiology, pedagogy.

Since the posters have to be brief and easily understood it may happen that their directions are more dogmatic than of proved scientific accuracy. *Coitus during the first half of*

pregnancy must not occur more than once a week. It must cease two months before the birth is expected, reads one. Teaching by poster has its drawbacks ; at a certain stage they are outweighed by its efficacy.

A special newspaper in Moscow, called *Za Zdorovui Buit* (*Toward a Healthy Life*), started in 1928 and appearing irregularly, is devoted to nothing but the sex enlightenment of the masses. Published by the Moscow Institute for Venereal Diseases at a cost of six kopecks for subscribers limited to Red Armyists, factory committees, doctors, and teachers, the paper describes itself as : "A hygienic-educational publication devoted to questions of the struggle with venereal disease, prostitution, and problems of the family, marriage, sex enlightenment, and sex education." Some 60,000 are printed and one copy is read by whole committees or Red Army detachments. There have been fourteen issues so far.

This newspaper is quoted here in some detail, as it is representative of the sexual education carried on, of the sincere, almost simple-minded "enlightenment" propaganda that has swept the Soviet Union.

First, the paper publishes argument and discussion. A letter or article published in one issue is discussed at length in the next. Answers to questionnaires sent out to innumerable groups, on every conceivable sexual question, are analysed and explained. Court stories are told, tales by doctors of their experiences. Contributions come from the whole country, from the frozen Arctic to the Chinese border. Quotations from classical authors, poems, real and imaginary conversations, letters of "confession," didactic articles, embody the paper's purpose. A conversation between a mother and child about sex, intended as a model for other parents, is continued through several issues.

One tale in a 1929 issue, "Outings on River Steamers," a frank recital of conditions on boats, illustrates the tone taken by some of the physicians in their efforts to bring medical knowledge to the masses. This is the story, much condensed, related by the director of the Venereal Disease Dispensary of the Department of Health on the Water.

About eight million people travel on our water transport during the season. A trip on a well-equipped steamboat should be a pleasure, but we know that it has a dark side to which we must turn our attention.

In our statistical material we repeatedly run into the same figure—that of the number of workers on boats who become infected by women passengers : 45 per cent. There are many reasons for this figure. First the "sex looseness," of which we hear not a little these days ; the favourable conditions on a steamer for having temporary relations ; and the circumstance that prostitutes and near-prostitutes find a boat a good place to do business because there is not much risk of discovery.

I will give a few cases from my experience. A young girl from a neighbouring town came to the dispensary with a case of syphilis. She said, "I was driven by need to lead a life of infamy." We sent her to the dispensary, from which she was dismissed when the outward symptoms of the disease disappeared. A short time later the mate of the steamer applied to us for treatment. He was surprised when I described this girl's appearance to him. I was not mistaken ; she was making regular trips on this steamer and had infected both him and two of his friends.

A first-class passenger on a much larger boat proposed to a boatman that he come to her cabin. That evening she left the boat. The boatman told us his experience and was astonished to have been infected by a "passenger of the first class."

One stolid-looking engineer said that he had been infected by a first-class passenger, a "very nice-looking young lady who acknowledged that she was travelling for the purpose of cohabiting with someone temporarily." She did not dare do so in her home town ; she had been a widow for six months and was actuated by the need for a sex life.

We carry on a big job of health enlightenment on steamers, but it can be done only while they are docked. I always take advantage of a trip to give lectures on the lower deck to our workers.

The editors of *Za Zdorovui Buit* attempt to state the scientific point of view in opposition to the moral or religious one. They take definite issue against religious or moralising treatment of sex matters. The sex teachings of the Church are ridiculed with as much contempt as are the superstitions of the Uzbek peasants. "Is there any need for prophylactic stations?" asked a reader, arguing that venereal disease

dispensaries should be done away with because they encourage men to go to prostitutes ; they know they can get treatment if infected and " if we protect our individual good-for-nothings they will not be punished." Dr. Bronner, editor-in-chief, answers :

The attitude of this reader resembles the old Church attitude, which declared it wicked to take prophylactic measures because diseases were sent by God as a punishment for violating his laws.

The newspaper gives information about the new institutions springing up daily where people may receive information, the sexual consultation clinics, domestic relations centres, and venereal disease dispensaries ; and about the new laws dealing with infection, alimony, marriage, divorce. The language of the articles is simple to the point of naïveté, sometimes vivid enough, at other times verbose and repetitive ; but the little-educated readers to whom they are addressed doubtless find the information new and often miraculous. I shall not forget the face of a peasant woman seeing for the first time at the Institute of Mother and Child models of the embryo at various stages of development. She had had twelve children, but had never understood the biological process. Visions of saints could not have excited her more.

Serious statements are made in the paper that elsewhere might pass for smoking-room jokes. " Any woman who wants to prevent conception should not depend on the man," states one article. " She should herself take the preventive measures. Men are almost always untrustworthy in the use of contraceptive measures ; you see it is not they who are going to be the real sufferers."

Young women are told not to start their sex life too early. A 1930 issue says :

Too much trustfulness resulting from your young inexperience and the absence of fundamental medical information may drive you to a premature beginning of your sex life, or to disorderly chance connections. And as a result you weep for many long years. Disease destroys your good health and turns you from blooming girls into semi-invalids.

An editorial note recommends that this article be cut and used in the wall newspaper and reprinted in papers that have a circulation among high-school students.

A report on " Youth and Sexual Health " tells what sex questions people are mainly interested in. " Masturbation, impotence, relations during menstruation, perversions, abortion, marriage after infection with a venereal disease, effect of such a disease on progeny, sex education of the child." It is mostly younger people who apply for information. All in all, the clinics find they have filled a need and " been useful in raising sex literacy."

These are some other titles of articles : " What Creates Natural Prostitutes " ; " Prostitution and Suicide " ; " Medical Examination Before Marriage " ; " Father Infanticides " ; " How Not to Punish a Child " ; " Childhood Love " ; " Alcoholism and Sex Crimes " ; " Alcoholism Among Contemporary Youth " ; " Actual and Factual Marriage " ; " From Bourgeois Sex Morality to the New Sex Life " ; " What Rôle the Pioneer Movement Plays in the Diminution of Masturbation." The paper uses the usual war language : " The Fight Against Gonorrhœa Is the Next Shock-Brigade Job " ; " The Struggle with Female Besprizornism " ; " All Forces to the Venereal Front." A Red Army man writes : " I hope that your paper may become a sharpshooter on the front for the liquidation of sexual over-indulgence." Socialist competitions are instituted between dispensaries. It is explained how the principles of the class struggle, the Marxian point of view, can be applied to sex questions.

Children are taught about sex frankly. The ideal is to have them learn about it as they learn about any other subject, with no undue emphasis. A danger is that some pedagogues¹ themselves don't know enough either about the laws of growth and development or about child psychology ; or they take a wrong attitude because " adults themselves received a bad sex education, and still suffer from the evils of a morality that surrounded the sex questions with pharisaism, secrecy, and ignorance." Because of such ignorance

¹ A peculiar Russian combination of children's psychologist and teacher (pedologist and pedagogue).

"when the child reaches the age of sex attraction and court-
ing, the leader of a Pioneer group often regards these as
improper manifestations, deals with them badly, and sets up
conflicts." So criticises the paper.

Nevertheless actually unsatisfactory sex adjustment in
adolescents is dealt with more or less in accord with the
practices of the best modern educators. An article on "Sex
Education in the Public Schools" quotes a letter from the
director of a second-grade school :

In our school we discovered certain unpleasant sex manifesta-
tions, lewd pictures drawn on the walls, even on girls' backs. . . .
A course of lectures on sex questions was arranged by the school
physician. . . . First came lectures, listened to breathlessly, on the
anatomy and physiology of the sex organs, with lantern slides ; then
on syphilis ; then on sex desire. Many written questions were handed
in at the close. The effect on the school's health was fine ; the interest
in lewd pictures ceased.

In an article called "Are Our Young People Immoral ?" a
physician reports almost the same kind of occurrence :

In one group of pupils, all young, about whose rudeness and
hooliganism all the teachers complained, we started some con-
versations about sexual matters. I confess it was with some fear
I began these ; I was afraid of vulgarity and cynicism. But nothing
of the sort ; the children listened with deep attention and asked
questions that would have done honour to a much older audience.
One of them expressed regret that they had not earlier received
this instruction ; it would have prevented them from soiling them-
selves soul and body.

Again and again the new criterion, the welfare of society,
is substituted for old moral standards. From a communication
on masturbation :

In general, it is the psychological rather than the physical results
that are bad. Our questionnaires show that fears, conflicts, and
downcast spirits result from the practice. The individual gets a sense
of his own insufficiency in relation to society. He feels isolated from
his fellows.

And this is bad because the communist must feel at one with
society, able to participate in all social activities.

A few articles are devoted to the bad effects of child-
beating, from a psychological and even a psychoanalytic
point of view, although psychoanalysis is generally frowned
upon in the USSR. Vera Schmidt, who ran a school based on
Freudian principles for some years in Moscow, contributes
an article in which she connects sexual feeling with corporal
punishment :

When grown-ups can't make children obey, they resort to the
last measure—corporal punishment. When one beats a child it
lightens his own spirit ; he has fulfilled his parental obligation. But
what about the child ? Pain, humiliation, anger, shame, the neces-
sity for exposing his bare body, awaken in the child a complex set
of emotions which resemble passion or sensual emotions.

Sex teaching is carried on in the schools. Conferences are
held and books published on methods of sexual pedagogics.
Children should know about sex as they know about health,
or the need for cleanliness, or the facts about Dnieprostroy,
that they may lead sane and natural and healthy lives.
They must not be fed lies, myths, or fairy tales, nor the
religious teachings of the Church. They need to have full
knowledge and a healthy attitude toward sex also because
they are apt to witness sexual scenes in their own homes, on
account of the crowded quarters. (I was in a cottage in the
Ukraine where a family of six occupied one bed.)

We must answer all young people's questions, gratify their curi-
osity in every respect ; otherwise when they begin to feel the sex
urge, if they do not know how to explain these feelings, they may
fall under the evil influences of religion. Sex instruction will protect
children from the petty bourgeois religious influences to which they
are especially susceptible at the time of puberty.

The ideal to tell the children everything is not always
carried out in practice, even when the children are old
enough to understand. As elsewhere, the analogy of birds,
beasts, and flowers is used and children may be left with un-
satisfied curiosity. Some parents believe that too much is told.
One girl complained that her sister of fifteen learned all
about contraception in her school and came home informing

her mother, "Now I can tell you all you want to know." The girl's family was annoyed with the school. "It will get her mind on subjects she doesn't have to know about yet," they said. The same arguments are heard as elsewhere on the advisability or harmfulness of early instruction.

The hypocrisy of Church teachings in sexual matters is ceaselessly insisted on. An article in *Za Zdorovui Buit* on "The Influence of Religion on Sexual Upbringing" (1930) sums up the Soviet attitude :

Our attitude toward everything concerned with sexual life is influenced by religion. The fact that to some of us sex is dirty, sinful, shameful and indecent is due to religion. Our preconceived picture of children as pure sinless creatures has prevented us from noticing that there are quite natural manifestations of sexual desire in children, and so we consider such manifestations wicked or a disease.

The Church introduced suppression of sexual desire as a part of the general system of self-denial of the most important and most natural demands of a human being—not accidentally, but to fulfil the social order of the ruling classes. A contemptuous attitude towards natural needs, and intimidation by threats of "sin," is one of the means of creating the kind of obedient, timid, and passive people that the oppressors of all times and periods desire to see.

The chief aim of our sexual upbringing is the control of the sexual impulse, its conscious regulation by the individual himself, and its adaptation to the social problems of humanity.

One thing should be remembered : Forcible suppression of a child's desire either increases it or drives it into channels where it escapes from our control. In both cases religion wins through our mistakes. Marxian theory teaches that the chief cause of religious feeling is conflict between man and natural forces that he can neither conquer nor understand. In the village elemental natural forces that may destroy the peasant farm, in the city the laws of capitalist economy bringing on crises such as unemployment and so on, keep workers under a threat. During childhood a child considers his desires as just such uncontrollable forces. The boy in "Tema's Childhood," who is naughty to his father, appeals to God : "My God, why am I so unhappy, why is it that though I want to be good I'm bad?" Realisation of helplessness and sin often leads to religion. There is a proverb "If you don't sin, you can't repent." And they want one to confess to the priest only.

A child who thinks himself dirty and wicked tends to avoid the company of other children and concentrate on his own feelings. And such a state is considered by all religions a necessary condition for developing a real religious feeling.

Having learned that his birth is due to his parents and their shameful and dirty affair, the child begins to shy away from them. And religion carefully replaces his sinful earthly parents by a heavenly father and mother who sinlessly gave birth to their son, Jesus Christ himself. The circle is formed and the doctrine about sexual sin that originates in the Church leads you back to the Church.

Some of these articles may create the impression that Russians suffer under "Victorian suppression" and inhibitions about sex as much as do Anglo-Saxons. That this is not the case has been pointed out elsewhere. The articles are aimed at those who still retain that old attitude.

Entertaining accounts have been written of the curious customs and beliefs doctors found in outlying villages and in the Far Eastern republics. Many people are still dominated by ideas of magic and other primitive beliefs. Many superstitions exist in relation to sexual disease, since here particularly the element of fear enters. In one district the inhabitants treated their sores with milk, cream, and curds, used magic charms, wore silver rings, made concoctions of different kinds of grasses. In parts of Central Asia it is still believed that human beings are followed by evil spirits from the cradle to the grave. In Turkmenistan the witch doctors hide a frog in their hands, and after pronouncing incantations, show the frog as if it were the evil spirit that had been exorcised.

In a district close to the Persian border the inhabitants call syphilis "sweet wound," because the sores caused by it are not painful ; for the same reason it is hard to get people to come to be healed. A doctor reported syphilis and gonorrhoea were the most frequent causes of sterility among women in one district.

In such cases they go to Holy Island, a fertile island in the river Amu-Darye not far from Hivi, hang vari-coloured ribbons on the

bushes, visit graves of the holy ones, and sometimes pass several days in prayer, without food and drink.

The reference is to sympathetic magic, the women going to a fertile island to be cured of sterility.

When doctors first come the people are frightened and witch healers spread tales such as that any one who goes to the travelling hospital will be branded by red-hot irons and sent out of the country. Before they can induce people to come the Soviet doctors have to remove these fears. One told me that he had to let some Uzbek peasants wear his wrist watch before he could prevail on them to come near him. The watch so fascinated them that they forgot their other fears. Enlightenment on medical subjects can be the entering wedge for the teaching of Soviet principles, "so a great responsibility rests with doctors."

One number of *Za Zdorovui Buit* (1929) was devoted entirely to the Red Army, and as always with Russian propaganda, the arguments for health and a controlled sexual life are *ad hominem*.

Every member of the Red Army and the Red Fleet should know that sex indulgence leads to a scattering of strength and perhaps infection; and this is absolutely intolerable in a Revolutionary period. "If we demand of every Red Army and Red Fleet man conscious military discipline, we demand from him conscious discipline in his sex life also." Lack of discipline in sex matters leads in the long run to diminishing fitness for war just as much as breaches of military discipline. Figures are quoted:

	<i>Men infected in 1,000</i>
In 1913, in the Czar's army	43
In 1925, in the Polish Army	37
In 1925, in the American Army	60
In 1925, in the Red Army	25
In 1926, in the Red Army	24

The writer asks how he can explain these figures (which I have not verified). His answer is that, as in the old days in Russia and in capitalist countries to-day, the soldier is

a mere machine, the chattel of the owning class, with neither rights nor independence; and since his self-respect is not fostered, he has little conscience about acquiring or spreading disease. The Red Armyist is in quite different case. He is an individual who of his own free will defends the interest of his class; he is conscious of his responsibility, not a mere cog in a machine.

Many letters from Red Army men bore witness that the Red Army appreciated its special number. Here is one from the Fifth Caucasian Regiment of Sharpshooters:

The issue got a quick response from the Red Army masses. . . . Every Red Armyist eagerly read it, and it was passed from hand to hand. We were especially interested in the article by Dr. Gurvich on pollution. There are actually cases where a Red Army man who has had nocturnal emissions has gone to a prostitute, thinking that the interruption of his sex life will have a bad effect on his health. I am ashamed as a literate man to confess it, but this article described exactly what I experienced when I first entered the Red Army and have since that time not infrequently experienced. I thank you for giving me a deeper understanding in the realm of sex life.

The paper replies:

The answer of I. R. to our article shows that our paper has attained its aim: to dissipate those prejudices about questions of sex life which have sprung up among the masses as inheritances of superstition as well as hang-overs from reading those unscientific books which, following the bourgeois morality, make it their business to frighten the population. From our work we know into what terror young people often fall (and older ones too) when they have read such books as *The Harm of Masturbation*, which make it their business to frighten people.

That the Soviet system of widespread publicity about sexual diseases must be helpful in wiping them out is testified to by Dr. P. S. Pelouze, assistant genito-urinary surgeon of the University of Pennsylvania, who estimates that 95 per cent of men in large cities the world over contract gonorrhoea some time during their lives, and that in most of the world the disease is on the increase. "We are not likely to do

much toward the general eradication of a disease when even its name cannot be mentioned in public," he says. "Countless people suffer infection by a disease that could, with a little general publicity and a lot of medical care, be greatly limited in its spread." In the USSR people are being trained to feel about venereal diseases as they do about colds, pneumonia, or scarlet fever: to have no more shame or hesitation in mentioning them. Then their cure and prevention can be effected.

The absence of desire for social vengeance upon sex delinquents is noticeable in all sex education. The authorities want to abolish the evils they describe, and do not believe punishment will achieve that end. Only the recital and explanation of facts, a desire in the people to become healthy, energetic workers for the Revolution, can bring it about.

Teaching, teaching, teaching.

CHAPTER XI FITTING MISFITS

The mental hygiene in all this—the best in the world—is security, present and future; sense of belonging, sense of being needed, of personal worth and value as a human being; confidence, consciousness of opportunity, freedom from fear.

—DR. FRANKWOOD WILLIAMS

IN A SANATORIUM in the Caucasus a notice reads *This Section for the Repair of Human Beings*.

Ill health, mental and physical, is almost unethical in the Soviet Union, especially avoidable ill health. One can imagine its being made a crime, as it was in Erewhon. Already wilful infection is a crime. Section 150 of the Criminal Code runs:

The premeditated infliction of less grievous bodily injury, not endangering human life, but causing permanent ill health or lasting disorder of the functions of any organ whatsoever, is punishable with imprisonment for a period up to three years.

Public health is one of the new state's chief concerns. "Wealth" in the Soviet Union has almost regained its original meaning of "health." The state is aware that its chief wealth lies in a healthy functioning population. And with characteristic communist logic, the emphasis of all public health work, mental and physical, is laid on the prevention of disease.

Those who do not fit into society, the maladjusted, neurotics, criminals, alcoholics, hysterics, prostitutes, must be adjusted as soon as possible.

I asked the Commissar of Health for his definition of

health in the individual. "Most physicians seek to cure the individual when he has become ill," he said. "We seek to create conditions under which people will not fall ill. Is the healthy workman under supervision in your country? No. With us he is. He is visited by doctors periodically. Our aim is to keep him healthy. We investigate conditions in our factories, to see that they will not cause diseases. If a number of workmen come to us from the same district with the same disease, conditions are examined in their factory to discover the cause of the disease, and any bad conditions are remedied. Every factory has a health department that is as important as the metal foundry, the rationalising or dining department. It is a branch of the United Dispensary [general district hospital]."

I asked the Assistant Commissar the same question. "It's a difficult question," he said, "which we have discussed a great deal. I should say that a person is ill if he is incapacitated for work. But no one definition of health will fit all classes. Do Mr. Ford and one of his workmen stay in bed for the same indispositions? No. Mr. Ford might stay in bed with a cold, but his workman would not stay away from work for the same reason; if he did he would probably be fired. That's why we say health is a different thing for different classes."

The People's Commissariat of Health was founded in 1918 and united functions that had previously been divided among other commissariats. It took as its slogan "The preservation of the health of the worker is the job of the workers themselves." A widespread network of dispensaries, clinics, and hospitals was immediately set up; institutions for the study of professional diseases, for the protection of motherhood, prophylactic institutions for children. Kurorts and sanatoria, in homes of the former aristocracy, became "repair shops for the workers." Medical units are sent to the remotest corners of the Union. The death rate is falling rapidly.

The hospital system of the USSR is well organised. In each district in the big cities a United Dispensary cares for all the inhabitants of that district. Every member of a family is visited in his home and at his work every six months. He

carries a health passport as we carry travelling passports. Where there are indications of inheritable or infectious diseases, every member of a family is called to the hospital for examination. The aim is to have the health of every human being in the USSR ultimately under permanent state supervision.

Semashko, ex-Commissar of Health, said: "Soviet medicine is to be transformed into socialist medicine; social hygiene is to show the road by which this can be achieved."

Mental health is recognised as being as important as physical health, and mental-hygiene work is to be universal and prophylactic. It is already very much more in the Soviet Union than dealing with the maladjusted and mentally diseased. Before I went to Russia I asked a leading psychiatrist in the United States to give me a list of the chief problems in American psychiatric social work, the stock problems of our social-service workers. I would see what Russia did about these matters. I put my questions to Dr. Leo Rosenstein, head of the Neuro-Psychiatric Institute and the leading Moscow psychiatrist.

"What is done for out-patients? What is done for after-care? How is education related to psychiatric work? What do psychiatrists do for crime? for child guidance? for the criminal insane? for insane criminals? What is done for feeble-minded and backward children? alcoholics? stutters? delinquents? How are perversions handled?"

I noticed, first, puzzlement at my questions, then a growing lack of interest; the answers seemed not to meet the question. "These are very important questions with us," I said.

"Not with us," answered the Communist psychiatrist. "We are not so interested in individual misfits as such. We are interested in making a life that will not produce misfits. Hence, some of your types of unadjusted no longer occur with us—we meet with few of the nervous troubles of 'leisured' people, of those unable to achieve, of the unemployed, of people long on the dole. And those that we do have we treat differently—not institutionally, but socially if we can. We try to retrain them in their normal environment.

We may alter the environment to suit the particular needs of the sick person where that is possible ; but our aim is to have him readjust at his work."

This is a new tool in social psychiatry. Who are the mal-adjusted individuals in the new society ?

"There are fewer than one might expect," said Dr. Zalkind, educator, sociologist, and chairman of the Neuro-Psychiatric Association. "Mainly they are the people who lost during the Revolution ; the former people, victims of the World War and those who suffered most during the famine. We have comparatively few neurotics, for most people have great plasticity within themselves to adjust to new conditions."

I had a curious experience myself illustrating this adaptability, the quickness with which new habits may be learned. My second day in the Soviet Union I was invited by an American correspondent to a party "on the sixth."

"What day of the week is that ?" I asked.

"I don't know. They've abolished the week and we never think about the names of days any more."

"You're not a Russian," I said. "You must know what day it is !"

He persisted. He did not know. I thought him merely obstinate. No American could forget the names of the days of the week just because the Russians had introduced the five-day week and abolished Sunday. A month later an American friend—a visitor—asked me for tea "next Wednesday."

"What date is that ?" I asked. And realised that I no longer used the names of days. This human adaptability may explain why Russians are not more antagonistic, as many Westerners think they should be, to their new way of life. (The word Saturday is still used, but means not a definite day of the week, but any one of his free days the worker gives to additional voluntary work.)

"At first after the Revolution there were many neurotics," Dr. Zalkind continued. "The fever of living, the swift violent changes, unbalanced people. But the number has decreased greatly. With the quick tempo of life and the many material

hardships under the Five Year Plan, neuroses are developing again. But our people have less sex conflict than Westerners. Russians always were more simple and realistic about their sex lives ; and now there is less struggle between the individual and society. The majority consent to and concur in the new government. The Soviet individual can be at one with himself."

Neurotics are regarded as much as possible as normal people, unadjusted only to particular work or a particular way of living, not to work or life in general ; and since the former can be altered, they are held to be only temporarily unadjusted, as a broken leg will make a man temporarily physically unfit.

A teacher was found to have a mental trouble that made her unfit for teaching. She might have been kept in a clinic or asylum for the rest of her life. But she could do simple manual tasks. She was given the job of sewing in a collective, and became just as useful and functioning a member of society as she had been as a teacher, merely working in a different collective. Since practically all work is regarded as equally important and socially useful, there was no loss of dignity in the change.

In other countries this treatment might have been called occupational therapy, but occupational therapy is usually carried on in special institutions devoted to the care of the mentally sick ; it would be almost impossible to place a person known to have a mental disease in a job if the employer knew it. In the Soviet Union it is usually possible to do what seems best for a patient. An English psychiatrist said he would be able to cure a much larger percentage of his cases if it were in his power to apply such measures in England.

"If a doctor prescribes social approval for a child, the school can see that he gets it," said Dr. Rosenstein. "If a man drinks because he hasn't enough to do, the Factory Committee can see that he be given more social work. A patient wanting to be singled out can be made a shock-brigader. So factories may continue the therapeutic work started in a hospital.

"We pay a great deal of attention to the study of the

pathology of labour," he said. "We study the individual in relation to his work, and at the place at which he works. We go into his home to find out about his family and sex life, and any particular troubles that may be upsetting him."

Industrial psychiatry has recently been recognised in the United States, though little is done in this field. But psychiatrists are growing aware of the importance of studying the individual at his work, under the ordinary conditions of his everyday life, rather than in the special environment of the clinic. "We work as much as we dream; the shop aspects of the human situation are as important as the human aspects of the shop situation," wrote a prominent American psychiatrist.¹

In Russia the factory, the school, prison, or farm, that does not have its psychiatrist in attendance is the exception. Psychiatrists study every conceivable psychological question: how the workers behave toward one another, toward the administration; if there are conflicts, what causes them, how they can be removed. The latest subject of study since the Soviet Union has adopted the conveyor system is what effect the conveyor has on the worker. Night work, the five-day week, the six-day week, the proper intervals for rest periods—all these are inquired into by industrial physicians and psychiatrists. "Mental hygiene should not limit itself to dramatic exhibitions of occasional successful cures," said Dr. Rosenstein.²

Mental hygiene as an isolated specialised movement such as we have in America is not developed much in Russia. Mental hygiene work has entered the factory. A large poster hung in many factories announces the existence of the State Institute of Mental Hygiene:

In order to protect the mental health of the workmen, the Institute has opened a Central Mental Hygiene Consultation Clinic to which you may go for advice from the physician on the following matters:

F. I. Wertham, "Progress in Psychiatry," *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 23, p. 1248, June, 1930.

²Speech at First International Congress on Mental Hygiene, Philadelphia, May, 1930.

1. Fatigue, nervousness, and how to deal with them
2. How to stop smoking and drinking
3. Sex life and health; the hygiene of marriage
4. Marriage and children for those who intend to get married
5. The selection of a profession
6. Work and rest

The patients are seen in the clinic every evening from six to eight. The clinic has an exhibition of material in connection with its work.

So the worker learns that mental hygiene is as important as bodily hygiene and is trained to regard it as important a duty to keep healthy as it is to work hard, loyally, and intelligently for society.

In line with the policy of stressing mental health rather than disease, Dr. Rosenstein often uses for demonstration cases in his clinical lectures healthy people and not the insane.

I asked what was done about sex perversions. "We do not punish adult homosexuals unless they induct children. Women may legally take men's names and live as men. I have happy, well-adjusted Lesbians, militiawomen or Red Armyists, who come to my clinics in their men's clothes and give the history of their lives for the benefit of the students.

"Much of the old scientific psychiatry we consider reactionary and fatalistic," he went on. "Psychiatrists used to be 'pure' scientists; they had no interest in altering the conditions that brought them their patients. We have. Each period in history of course creates its new psychiatry. Pinel was influenced by the French Revolution; in 1887 two physicians in Russia declared the best cures for certain illnesses were Czarism and religion. Korsakov, one of our greatest doctors, was a liberal and would take no steps for his patients that interfered with the liberty of the individual. We to-day are building mental hygiene in a Soviet way. We find rich new material to study. Collective behaviour is different from individual behaviour."

I asked what had become of such reactions as inferiority feelings, from which it has been said almost every Western adult suffers.

"Naturally there is less feeling of inferiority when any child can join a Pioneer group, any one can become a shock-brigader, more from the snail into the locomotive class, get his name and photograph in the paper, gain public distinction and respect in his particular field by working well. No one with us need suffer because he cannot make his dent in the world. Recently a young American boy said he wanted to kill himself so that he could get his name in the papers. Many of your citizens do perform strange antics 'to get publicity,' as you call it. With us legitimate carrying out of one's daily task will achieve the same end. We are trying to organise our life so that all sides of human nature will find their satisfaction. As Lenin said, it is not what instincts you have, it is what you do with them, that counts."

The policy is followed whenever possible of not drawing particular attention to a nervous ailment. Some child stutterers found they could not speak in the general assemblies, so they organised their own group. The members spoke before one another until they could do so without stuttering. "They were so anxious to give their opinions on the questions being discussed that they had to get their words out clearly!" said the psychiatrist in charge. They soon found they could talk before one another, but not before other people; in the new emotional environment they stuttered again. Another group was formed to speak before a few others; when they had mastered that the audience was widened, and so on. Many of them were cured.

Although the method of psycho-analysis is used by psychiatrists, psycho-analysis is generally frowned on. Russian psycho-analysts have left the country. No one practices psycho-analysis only. It is hard to pin Marxians down to an exact explanation of their disapproval. They frequently attack with more vigour than understanding. One sociologist and physician said the sociological theories of Freud were inadmissible for Marxists, especially those expressed by Kolnai, who regards Bolshevism as "a product of the Oedipus complex and an obvious paranoiac regression." Another objected to "Freud's idealistic *Weltanschauung*," a third to works being regarded as sublimated sexuality.

"We do not regard sex as a basic and prime factor in human motivation," he said. "When a worker in the past was more interested in his personal life than in work and social needs, that was not on account of a 'universal sex urge,' but because under capitalism he was working for exploiters and not for his own people. Under our conditions of work sex falls into its proper place, which is not first." Others again feel that the tendency toward introspection that psycho-analysis fosters is out of harmony with the extrovert attitude demanded at present.

"What distinguishes Marxism is its conception of class, and of capitalism as a class system, from which arises the fact of class struggle," said another physician discussing the two philosophies. "Of the differences that divide society, occupational and intellectual, geographical and racial and national, we consider the most important difference to be that of class. We believe individual differences spring from class differences, not vice versa. Freud was a bourgeois writer and there is much bourgeois ideology mixed up in his work. He has also given us much that is useful. But we have not yet worked out which of his teachings are to be accepted and which rejected." Commissions are at work discussing the relations of Freudism and Marxism; as tendencies of the new life become better defined, the relationships of the two sciences will become clearer.

Some psychiatrists believe that unsatisfactory environment and conditions, including parents, cause most maladjustments in children. "We no longer believe that nervous troubles are due largely to heredity," said Dr. Simon, the wise sympathetic woman psychiatrist in charge of the Moscow Neurological Institute for Nervous Babies. "Children inherit neurotic constitutions, but many psychopathic characteristics are due to environment and these we can deal with."

Russia is bringing up a collective child and this is not forgotten even in the treatment of problem or unadjusted children. Children of from one day to four years of age are brought to this institute, and pregnant mothers who are nervous, psychopathic, or mentally diseased. It is the clearing-house for the most difficult cases in the capital.

"We would like to have all children in the collective," Dr. Simon declared, "so many difficulties and problems develop in children living in their own families. From the close relationship to the mother they become over-emotional, too closely tied, spoiled, over-indulged. An only child, when another comes, may grow jealous, bad-tempered, antisocial. The collective breeds far fewer such hysterical reactions, for here there is no identification with the parent. We try to make the educators treat all children alike."

"A mother has brought me a child that will not eat at home. He has eaten nothing but caviare for two months. The mother, a nervous hysterical woman, plays games at meals, tries music, gives the child toys, anything to distract his attention; all in vain. Finally she brings him to us. We put him in the group; in three days the little boy is eating everything."

It is long, slow, and almost impossible to educate mothers to treat their children properly from a mental-hygiene point of view, thinks Dr. Simon. "Mothers pay too much attention to little naughtinesses and bad habits; nag a child who sucks his thumb or bites his nails, punish, threaten, or severely frighten a child who masturbates, are for ever saying, 'Don't.' No—we have a better and quicker method of bringing up healthy children. The collective is a new therapeutic tool; it gives us an opportunity of treating a child in a way that was impossible before."

"In our little nurseries you can already see the strides we have made with our collective education. Our children don't say, 'This is mine, give it to me!' They say, 'This is ours.' Recently a mother came to visit her child and the little girl took her to teachers and other children saying: 'This is our mother.'"

In the schools and nurseries attached to neurological clinics every child is accorded the special and individual treatment it seems to need, but always within the framework of the ideals or virtues the new society is trying to establish.

"A 'shut-in' child, for instance, at first won't take part in any group activities," said Dr. Simon, "but sits off alone by himself; so we make his play interesting, praising him for

everything he does, and soon he takes more and more part. Epileptoid children have excessive energy; we give them several jobs and accustom them to using their energy for collective purposes."

Hysterical children who like to attract attention, exhibitionistic children who like to dance, wear ribbons, dress up, act, these are put in dramatic circles, where their exhibitionism may be socially useful. A child that needs and should have praise is put on a team that will be sure to earn praise, and so he will win merit for his team, not for himself alone. There are many special schools for the re-education of feeble-minded, deficient, and delinquent children.

Even in ordinary schools the psychiatrist in charge sees that the particular personality traits of the children are corrected or encouraged. In a Pioneer school a boy of fourteen was aggressive, stole, beat his companions. He was critical of everything and always expressing his opinions. The Pioneers wanted to expel him from the organisation. They consulted the physician first. She advised that the boy be made chief correspondent of the wall newspaper, where he could exercise his critical faculties. He did so well that he was made editor; and soon he was writing for the Pioneer *Pravda*, the national Pioneer organ. He was also made head of a Pioneer team. His energies were effectively used in these creative outlets, and his symptoms disappeared. When he left school he was given a certificate stating he was capable of leading any Pioneer brigade.

I asked Dr. Simon about the Oedipus complex. "The children who have it very soon exhaust it," she said. "Some may attach this reaction to the teacher but it is so weak that you would have to look for it. The criticism of their parents we foster among children tends to make them more independent of them. Socialist competition between parents and children is one of our new educative tools that has proved tremendously useful, as it also is a moral force."

I raised the Western objection that so much education carried on in institutions might develop the "institution type of child." "Our collective does not bring up such," she answered. "What you call the 'institution type' depends on

the type of institution. We always put the welfare of the individual child foremost. Our teachers love the children. They work with the children because they love that work and because they recognise its importance, not merely because they have to make a living somehow."

"Do you punish in the collective?" I asked.

"What do you mean by punishment? If a child disturbs others at meals it is made to sit alone. If it won't wash its hands it is told it cannot have its dinner till they are clean. The other children disapprove of one of their companions having dirty hands at dinner. A child hasn't much interest in being stubborn if he finds no notice is taken of him. And of course we never beat a child. If the parents do we take them to the People's court."

"And if a child lies?"

"Lying is often due to the severity of the parents. A child's instinct is strong to do the forbidden thing. But actually our children don't lie much any more. Recently a child was told by her parents to tell some friends over the telephone they were not in. She did and immediately turned around and said, 'I did that for you, Mother, but I don't think we should lie.' The phrase '*chestnoe slovo*, on my word of honour,' has been replaced among children by '*chestnoe Leninskoe slovo*, on Lenin's honour.'"

Religion is never invoked as a cure for the mentally sick. Marxians believe it increases introspection and weakens the psychological stability of the individual by substitution of faith for a critical analysis of the environment. At a meeting of the Behaviour Congress in Moscow in 1931 it was held that religion in its various manifestations is

a rather harmful factor for the development of the individual; it interferes with his adjustment to reality, creates a certain amount of fear and compromise; religious observances and activities diminish interest in other fields of human activity.

"We seek to make an environment that will allow of mental health, to end conditions that create conflicts," said Dr. Rosenstein. "The old psychiatry shut itself up in the hospital or clinic. Doctors had no opportunity to study

patients at work. To-day our psychiatrists go out to shop, school, factory, field, and farm, and not only study the workers and the conditions of their work but try to see that these are such as will not create nervous troubles."

Mental hygiene in the Soviet Union is more than a therapeutic discipline—it is an educational method; and it is more than an educational method—it is a means of creating the good life. Through the co-ordination of all life by a central plan towards a conscious and universally understood end, the Soviet citizen's individual needs will harmonise more and more with society's; his activity being fitted into the general scheme, he will not be rent by conflicts; and his adjustment will be of his personality as a whole functioning (energetically) to the desired end. All sides of his nature can find their satisfaction without disturbing the satisfactions of others or conflicting with his individual ethics. That is the end toward which Soviet mental hygiene and Soviet life are working.

CHAPTER XII

ENDING PROSTITUTION

Soviet life does not permit of prostitution.

—A SOVIET PHYSICIAN

"IN 1926 you could hardly walk through the Square of the Revolution on the Tverskaya at night," said an old resident of Moscow, "it was so thick with prostitutes. Now you hardly see one. They have been swept away." No country has ever abolished prostitution, and many sociologists believe no society can. So I took the remark to be part of the Soviet exaggeration that regards a plan as an accomplished fact. "They've probably moved to some other part of town," I answered casually.

But I made inquiries. And I found that of Moscow's twenty thousand registered prostitutes before the Revolution, some six or seven hundred remained. They are no longer registered, but every one within whose province this problem came, doctors, sociologists, psychiatrists, the Institute of Social Hygiene, gave the same approximate figure. And the streets and squares tell their own story. The visitor from Berlin or Paris looks in vain for silent figures lurking in doorways or parading the streets. Few still figures accost the passer-by in Russia to-day.

In the days of the Czars prostitution was a legalised institution condoned by State and Church. Prostitutes, regulated by the police, carried yellow passports. "Houses of patience" were provided for officers and men of the Czar's army in peacetime; during wars brothels were officially maintained at the rear of the armies. But while the institution was sanctioned by the old régime, individual practitioners were victimised. The "house" could buy protection, the individual

prostitute could not. Police persecution was common. Women suspected of being prostitutes were rounded up, examined at police headquarters, often violently beaten, and sometimes imprisoned.

The Soviets pursue an opposite course; the institution is attacked, the individual prostitute neither penalised nor persecuted. The old punitive measures, the yellow ticket, the "moral police," have been abolished. Prostitutes are not social outcasts. "They are pitiable double victims of the accursed system of private property and of the abominable moral hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie," said Lenin.

Strict legal measures were taken to wipe out procurers, madams of houses, those who carried on the white-slave traffic, all who organised and profited by the trade. An American living in Soviet Russia tells of a criminal case that came to her notice in which several prostitutes charged the keeper of the house where they lived with forcing men upon them, and the militiaman on the beat with using his position to try to compel complaisance. The militiaman and the keeper of the house were punished, and the latter was ordered to make over to the girls involved all the furniture of their rooms without pay, "to the end that they may not be economically dependent on her nor forced to act under her direction against their own wishes."¹ To-day there are no brothels in the Soviet Union.

The Soviets' two main objections to prostitution are: first, that it is a social abnormality, similar to poverty, alcoholism, or crime, the result of class inequalities and the social relationships created by the capitalist order; second, that it perpetuates the inequality of the sexes and the exploitation of women which characterise that order. Communism seeks to abolish exploitation, whether of workers or of women; the exploitation of a woman's body is as reprehensible to a communist as is the exploitation of the worker and peasant by capitalist and landlord.

Soviet authorities have not maintained the same policy towards prostitution in successive post-Revolutionary epochs. As conditions changed, policy altered. The director of the

¹ Anna Louise Strong, *Marriage and Morals in Soviet Russia*.

Venereological Institute in Moscow, Dr. Bronner, gives a dialectical history of these changes. He writes :

The Great October which put an end to the capitalist régime left us not a few cursed inheritances that it has not been easy to outlive. We inherited prostitution from the capitalist system. How has the Soviet Government sought to combat prostitution all these years?

In the period of War Communism, when our fighting slogan ran : "He who does not work shall not eat," when all citizens were obliged to work, those women who preferred selling their bodies to occupying themselves with useful work were treated as "labour deserters." They were collected in concentration camps and put to work.

With the establishment of the NEP, unemployment appeared, and then women's backwardness and lack of training became manifest. Unemployment struck at women first, and prostitution grew. We now found we could not treat the problem as we had treated it during the period of War Communism. To punish prostitution by forced labour when there is unemployment is absurd.

So the Soviet Government began developing other methods. . . . We said : "If the Government cannot assure to all women the work they need to make a living, it cannot punish them for earning a living as best they can—in this instance by taking their own bodies to market." Our attitude came out clearly in the Instructions to the Militia of the People's Commissariat for Domestic Affairs. Point Five reads : "Inasmuch as a prostitute has taken to her life because of unsatisfactory material and living conditions, a militiaman coming into contact with her in the course of duty must observe all the rules of politeness toward her and permit himself no rudenesses. . . ."

I was asked whether I thought that with the abolition of unemployment, prostitution would disappear. I answered : "As a mass phenomenon, yes. There will still be individual instances where one or another woman will prefer the sale of her body to hard work—but in such cases we would abandon our kindly attitude toward the prostitute and adopt the attitude we took during the period of War Communism—treat her as a labour deserter."²

To-day a job awaits any Russian woman who wants one. And since sexual freedom prevails, with neither legal nor conventional barriers to the satisfaction of sexual needs, the question is asked why any prostitutes exist at all.

"The majority come from those remnants of parasitical

² *Za Zdorovii Buit*, 1930.

society who have not been able to find their way into the new forms of working life," a doctor explained. "These may influence their friends to take to the same life, especially illiterates of low-grade intelligence who know no trade. But there are young peasant girls too who come to the cities looking for jobs. They may start with a domestic job and then perhaps don't like the work or are fired, and so find themselves on the streets."

One young girl told me that while wandering about, having left a servant's job where she was miserably treated, a man picked her up, gave her shelter, and "so introduced me to the life of a prostitute." Others loiter around railway stations and there "the demand" comes from the transitory population or "the unscrupulous and drunkards." Peasant girls are frequently too shy and ashamed of their behaviour to go to the authorities and ask for shelter, especially if they are diseased.

There are still also some besprizornie girls who reach womanhood having learned no trade. They have never gone to school or lived in society, they have no home, and so take to prostitution as the only possible means of subsistence. Even if offered a job they would hate the routine and regularity. But there are not many of these left.

The housing shortage is a factor in creating prostitutes. Girls may become prostitutes merely to get a place to sleep. This trouble is also being dealt with. Others again take up the trade as an avocation to earn extra money.

Their start may come about accidentally, from a simple acquaintanceship, from a jolly company of young fellows and women who like to drink together and have a good time. Or some working girl who takes a light view of sex, or does not know what it may lead to, gives herself for a pair of silk stockings, a ticket to the theatre, patent-leather shoes, and little by little is drawn into prostitution. Against such, of course, relentless education and propaganda must be carried on.³

Prophylactoria for the rehabilitation of prostitutes were first established in 1924 ; every large city had several. They were Exhibit A as a show place (no foreign visitor could

³ *Za Zdorovii Buit*, 1929.

avoid visiting them), not because of any beauty of building or arrangements—on the contrary, the buildings are usually dingy and drab—but because they demonstrate the distinction between the Soviet Union's attitude and that of non-communist countries toward social evils.

To the prophylactoria the prostitutes come to work, learn a trade, get medical treatment, be taught, and get recreation. Young girls and middle-aged women sit at long tables in rooms with the usual bare walls and floors, the usual prints of Soviet leaders looking down on them. Dressed in dull frocks and cotton stockings, some with red kerchiefs on their heads, they learn to knit stockings by machine, make mattress covers, manufacture boxes, woollen goods, bags, underwear. The work is simple and rather coarse, not demanding great attention or concentration. For the women have not been used to work and many do not take to it easily, even if they want to give up their former life. They are paid trade-union rates, and give back some for board and lodging. The prophylactoria are not charitable institutions, and every prostitute knows that she pays for what she gets with the money she earns by her work.

At the end of a year, if the reclaimed prostitute is proficient she is sent to a job. The other workers are not told her history, for many of the women are ashamed of their past. The Factory Committee, however, has to know, for it must keep an eye on the new worker, see that she goes regularly to the dispensary for medical treatment, that there is no backsliding. After she has worked in the factory for a while, the committee passes on her fitness, and decides whether or no she shall be kept on.

Careful attention is paid to the psychological rehabilitation of the prostitute. Every measure is taken that will lead the women to regard themselves as ordinary workers, normal members of society. Whenever possible the women do not live on the premises, but at some distance, so that they will get the feeling from the beginning that they "go to work every day." The director of one prophylactorium explained: "It is not enough just to tell them about our attitude in words; we must show them what it is by all our actions. In

order to develop in them the group feeling that they will need in society, we let them work in groups and pay each woman her share of the group's earnings. This keeps their work at a higher level; they do not like to slack when they know that means that each will get less pay."

The method by which prostitutes are brought to the prophylactorium carries the implication that they are not blameworthy as individuals, nor are they to be punished. Red Armyists and militiamen speak to them on the streets, try to persuade them to go to the prophylactorium; they may reason and argue, but they are forbidden to use force. There must be no hint of arrest. The prostitute either goes of her own free will or she does not go. But considerable moral suasion may be employed.

The educational and cultural side of rehabilitation is stressed. The prophylactorium has a clinic, a restaurant, and a club; dramatic, musical, and literary circles, and classes in reading and writing, social and political questions. The women are to know as much as other citizens when they are back in society.

The same education activities are carried on in their living-quarters. At the dormitory I visited, two militiawomen stood at the entrance. No other sign betrayed that the house was different from any other workers' dormitory. The militiawomen were there to see that men did not come in, that the women did not get rowdy or meddlesome when they came home drunk; and to prevent inmates from running away or going on the streets at night, as some attempt to do when they first come.

The women seem to like their communal homes, and even make some attempt to beautify them. The usual prints of Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin, or Marx adorn the walls, with posters, slogans, and pictures of the symptoms of venereal diseases. But the women also draw pictures themselves, write their own wall newspaper, do a little embroidery. One painting showed a girl sitting on a doorstep, eyes bandaged, head sunk, a couple of empty bottles askew at her feet. This was called *The Old Life*. Most of the pictures have such moral lessons. In one dormitory a girl jumped up from the bed on

which she had been sitting and screamed hysterically at the doctor. He was unperturbed. Outside he told me that she didn't like the colour of her blanket and was abusing the matron for having overlooked her promise to change it.

Medical education plays an important part in both home and prophylactorium. The social aspects of venereal disease and its spread are stressed. "We tell them that formerly they lived a sick life and now they are being shown the path to a healthy one," said a physician.

Nevertheless all shame for their former lives is not eradicated. Former prostitutes do not always tell husbands where they work, referring to the prophylactorium as "the factory." They do not want other women to know where they are either, "for our 'good women' look down on them," my doctor friend said. I found this surprising. "I know the average petit-bourgeois woman might, but why should a proletarian woman, who knows the pinch of economic necessity herself, look down on one who is driven to this calling?" "We don't know ourselves," she answered, with a slow humorous smile. "Perhaps it's envy. They say, 'I have only one husband, and she has all these men.'"

The re-education of the prostitute is carried on by all the usual means. Travelling exhibits are taken around the country, to factories, mills, clubs, and where soldiers are encamped for manoeuvres. The Moscow Theatre of Health Education puts on plays dealing with prostitution and venereal diseases; there is a drama circle in the People's Commissariat of Health; one of the staff tells about it:

As one of those who took part in the play *The Trials of a Prostitute*, I wish to tell how the play was received by the workers. Everywhere we went we had great success. The workers in factories and mills were much interested and the play aroused serious discussion. They were especially pleased that all the actors were either assistants in the venereal disease dispensary or from their own factories and mills. All the factories gave us their hearty co-operation and in many collections were taken up for the fight against prostitution.⁴

In special health and educational newspapers individual cases are recounted and cases from the lawcourts reported.

⁴ *Za Zdorovui Buit*, 1929.

One such tells of a worker and his wife, earning together 163 roubles a month, who found this "not enough, especially not enough to cover drink." So the wife started augmenting her earnings on the street, and also drew her eldest daughter into the trade. "Tonka, will you take a walk with me?" she asked her one day, threatening punishment if she would not, and "so the disgusting trade began." The money earned was spent on vodka. The court deprived the parents of their children, condemned the woman to four years in jail and the husband to two years, and both were exiled from Moscow district for three years.

This case illustrates the Soviet distinction between ignorance and wilful bad behaviour. In Western countries ignorance is no defence before the law; in Russia ignorance is the defence that makes delinquency most excusable. "Workers and peasants have had little opportunity of being informed; they were kept in ignorance by the Czar and for this they cannot be blamed," explained a judge. But the law is relentless against a person who knows better, when he acts wittingly against the interests of society.

Eloquent letters from former prostitutes attest their reclamation. One young girl, abandoned by her husband when pregnant, was taken by some women to a house of prostitution, where she lived until her child was born. She was infected, but finally found her way to a prophylactorium. She gave up her old life, became a member of the Moscow Soviet. Such stories are dear to the hearts of a people whose beloved leader's command was, "Every cook must learn to govern Russia." Another former prostitute writes:

I fell ill, and the prophylactorium took me in. It was hard for me to get used to work, hard to wean myself from the past. Often I longed to be on the street. But then I began to go to lectures and movies, to fight with myself and root out the bad in me. Step by step I got rid of my old ways. Now I no longer long for the streets. I take part in a dramatic circle, study, am a member of an orchestra. Never again shall I fall into the ditch of infamy.

Much of this work is reminiscent of Salvation Army methods and conversions, excepting that in the Soviet Union

religion is never invoked. Conversion is to social rather than to religious loyalty.

Training and fitting the women for normal working life is the most important method of combating prostitution. But other measures are taken. Factories and farms are urged not to dismiss women from employment without knowing that they have somewhere to go, especially if they are without support. Homeless girls are organised into agricultural and industrial artels.⁵ Special communal houses and dormitories are turned over to women and local departments of health, trade unions, and the Society of the Friends of Children look after young girls. Special places in professional and technical schools are held open for women. One assumption underlies all these measures : Girls who are able to earn their living at honest work will not become prostitutes.

Thus the supply is dealt with. But there is also what is picturesquely termed in Russia "the fight with the demand." A new attitude must be created in men. Those who "take advantage of the obvious weakness of women" should not be gently dealt with. One newspaper article says :

We must strike with all Bolshevik firmness against the demand for the prostitution of young girls. A statute in our criminal code embodies severe measures of social protection against those having sex relations with any person who has not attained sex maturity. It is necessary to enforce these laws, to have a few exemplary trials and bring down the weight of penal repression upon the heads of the criminals. This is a warning to weak characters. The Society of the Friends of Children should mobilise social attention to this question and should help to bring to light those who create the demand for child prostitution.⁶

A daily paper in Moscow, the *Rab Moskva*, threw open its columns to a discussion by workers of the best means to be taken in combating the demand. "Our fight should be prolonged and stubborn," wrote one. "There is no use in hiding the fact—there are 'consumers' of prostitutes even among

⁵ Artel is an old Russian form of co-operative organisation ; in the Soviet movement for the collectivisation of agriculture it represents a transition stage to the commune, the latter providing for complete collectivism.

⁶ *Za Zdorovui Buit*, 1929.

workers. We are often the cause of a woman's taking to the life of the streets. We need less indifference and tolerance." And another : "We must create among the workers an attitude of holding in general contempt any one who has relations with a prostitute. The consumer of prostitutes must be treated with contempt." One contribution from a woman ran : "The fight with the demand is the fight for the rights of women, for a comradely and human relation towards her, for actual equality of the sexes."

There are other reasons why a new attitude toward prostitution must be firmly imbedded in the new man. It has been observed that prostitution and prosperity go together : the more prosperous a people is, the greater the demand for ladies of pleasure. In the Soviet Union prostitution increased during the NEP period. An inquiry in 1926 showed that men in better-paid professions resorted to these pleasures more than those in less well-paid ones :

Trade	Pay in roubles	Percentage who re- sorted to prostitutes
Unskilled workers	50	29.6
Trade unknown	70	37.
Printers	90	40.
Metal workers	110	46.9

Many people say : "Yes, prostitution has disappeared now because there is work for all, little leisure and less prosperity, but wait till the good times come !" So it is important that distaste for prostitution be strongly rooted when prosperity and leisure do come, so that men will not fall back into the bad old ways. A new attitude of mind is more necessary than laws.

That a fresh attitude has taken root, especially among certain groups, there can be no doubt. One does not find in modern Russian poetry that sentimental sympathising with the prostitute that can be found in some poetry of other countries, especially in the younger "aesthetic" school. "The inspiration of those modern poems which transformed every prostitute into a sentimental Madonna was healthy enough," Lenin remarked in conversation with Clara Zetkin. "They

were inspired by social sympathy and dislike of the hypocritical morals of the bourgeoisie. But the healthy seed was eaten into by the petit-bourgeois tumour and made sickly."

Poets and writers do not regard prostitutes as "outcast, unspeakable, untouchable," nor do they mention the trade in terms of horror. Young Communists show no more sentimental interest in prostitutes than they do in drunkards or neurotics. They hardly enter their consciousness; they have forgotten that prostitution ever was a problem and are recurrently surprised at any visitor's curiosity.

"Are no disciplinary or legal measures ever taken against prostitutes or their 'consumers'?" foreigners ask. The enthusiastic social workers of Russia, whose faith is that nothing man tries can fail of achievement, are unwilling to admit that they ever have to adopt coercive methods. I persisted with my questioning of one young factory worker whose duty it was to bring prostitutes to a prophylactorium. He dodged, evaded, but finally somewhat reluctantly admitted: "Well, if there is nothing we can do, if they are obstinate, if they will not permit us to make of them decent Soviet citizens, if they persist on their unhealthy road, why, then we may send them to prison. We go on re-educating them there. But if even that doesn't cure them, if they still insist on living the old life, utterly refuse to become socialised human beings, why then—we may send them to Solofki."

Solofki is the prison camp in Siberia to which political prisoners of the new régime are exiled, the "habitual criminals" of Soviet society. These "two-time losers," wilful parasites who will not reform, kulaks, speculators, exploiters, profiteers, incorrigible drunkards and prostitutes, are regarded as carriers of socially dangerous diseases, as traitors or counter-Revolutionaries, and the measures taken against them are measures taken by any society against those who threaten its existence.

There still remains the question: Are there natural or "inborn" prostitutes? Discussion has long raged on this point. Some scientists assert that certain types of personality lead to prostitution, others that the calling creates a type of personality. In the Soviet Union the problem is studied

by doctors, psychiatrists, criminologists. Investigations among the prostitutes themselves are facilitated, since they are gathered together under one roof.⁷

An interesting paper was read on certain pathological aspects of prostitution before the Congress on Human Behaviour at Leningrad in 1930 by Dr. B. R. Gurvich, a psychiatrist specialising in this subject. Her conclusions were that the typical lying, boasting, deceit, inclination to fantasy, etc., of the prostitute were not inborn. Close questioning of many prostitutes showed them to have been acquired, she asserted. Possibly a desire to support the Marxian viewpoint weights the balance of "impartial" inquiry, but her contention was upheld by many facts.

H. G. Wells ends his section on prostitution in *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*:

In that saner, better instructed and franker world to which we seem to be moving, when women will be able to fend for themselves, and will be as free to come and go and do this and that as men are, the peculiar needs, tensions, shames and distresses that have maintained the prostitutes' quarter, the red-lamp district, the Yoshiwara, throughout the ages, may be at last alleviated, and prostitution as a special and necessary act of social life may be superseded and disappear altogether.

In the Soviet Union to-day one does not find "the peculiar . . . shames and distresses that have maintained the prostitutes' quarter" any more than one finds such prostitutes' quarters themselves. The Soviets, instead of saying that prostitution may disappear, claim with pride, and truthfully⁸ that though some individual prostitutes may still exist, prostitution as an organised profession has been abolished.

⁷ In the West one of the few times such a collective study could be made was in 1917, when American soldiers arrived in England. The United States Government suggested to the British that in order to preserve American soldiers from infection Piccadilly prostitutes be rounded up and segregated. They were taken to Holloway Gaol for several weeks.

⁸ On his visit to the USSR in the summer of 1932, Dr. Frankwood Williams, one of the leading American mental-hygienists, found four out of Moscow's five prophylactoria closed. They had served their purpose.

CHAPTER XIII CRIME AND NO PUNISHMENT

Sentences must not cause the criminal needless suffering.

—CRIMINAL CODE RSFSR, ARTICLE 26

YOU STOP before an old dilapidated house resembling other peeling houses in Moscow and walk along a dingy passage in which a few people are wandering about or sitting with Russian patience on backless benches. You pass some doors, tacked up outside of which are untidy sheets torn out of exercise books or backs of old butcher's bills, with lists scrawled in illegible longhand. They are lists of the cases that are to come up that day in that court-room. For this is a lawcourt in the Soviet Union, one of the thousands of People's Courts that by the decisions of simple working people are hammering into form the law and precedents of the new society, and reflecting the social conditions and civilisation that exist to-day.

I strolled into a crowded room whose benches were filled with shabbily dressed working people. An air of expectation hovering over the room had eased some of the strain of those faces. At one end on a raised platform was a long table covered with green cloth; behind it were three chairs, the one in the middle larger than the other two. From the wall above the middle chair Karl Marx looked out of his forest of hair and beard; from the opposite wall blinked bearded and spectacled Kalinin. A red banner bore the slogan: *The People's Court Is the Sentinel of Revolutionary Legality*. There were no other decorations, no bailiff or sheriff or witness stand; no wigs or flowing gowns. A little boy played about near the judges' table; a cat lay asleep in the sun.

A door at the back of the room opens and three men in workmen's clothes take their seats at the table. One has on only a singlet, no shirt or waistcoat; none wears a collar. The judge, who has taken his seat in the middle chair, has a long thin intelligent face with finely cut features; his helpers, the two lay judges, have come straight from their jobs to the court. One is a worker in an aeroplane factory, the other a tram conductor. They are practically untrained in the law.

The proceedings begin. The judge reads from the folder of papers before him the documents in the case, mostly written like the notices on backs of bills or torn pages from exercise books, and from the people on the benches two or three sort themselves out; one comes up to the table. The others are ordered out of the room; they are the witnesses. The accused, in a grey coat, without stockings or hat, is asked her name, age, occupation, social origin, and whether she is a Party member. She is charged with being drunk and noisy in her apartment; the head of the house administration is there to try to have her removed. The witnesses, as they are called in, all testify that the girl has made life in the kitchen (where four families cook) unbearable. The girl indignantly denies every accusation; she never drinks; there is a conspiracy among the other occupants of the apartment to get her out. She has held responsible positions, defiantly brings corroborating documents out of a bulgy brief-case. As the witnesses confirm the testimony, one by one, she argues, fights, contradicts, and if looks could kill they would fall dead before they got to the table. One pretty blonde in particular she attacks with venom, but the girl answers back as spiritedly, and they stand before the judge like two fighting hens. Even the judges are enjoying the show and do not interrupt. A German motion-picture director sitting next to me whispers that if he had a camera he would get snapshots of expressions no trained actors ever approached. The atmosphere in the courtroom grows so tense that some of the audience start tittering. The judge warns them that they must go outside unless they can be dignified.

The girl secretary sitting at one end of the baize-covered table asks the judge for a match and the judge lights himself a cigarette also ; the cat jumps from the window sill on to the lap of a boy on one of the benches. The accused is asked to sit down, and she does, but each minute jumps to her feet again, now to refute a statement made by the judge, now to throw an insult at a witness, now to make a scathingly sarcastic remark to the house administrator, and last, to show a photograph given her in former times by the actress with the red bandanna who is now giving testimony against her—this to prove that once the two were friends. The judge suggests that she sit down, but she cannot sit still. One witness is being asked about the girl's parents. "They were sent into exile," she says, and then, turning to the accused, "Isn't that so? Say it yourself, weren't your parents sent into exile?"

Almost before we have grasped the intricate stories of the witnesses this case is over ; accused and witnesses are dismissed. Sentence will be pronounced later. Another couple stands before the judges' table, this time two young men in military uniform. They have sold weapons entrusted to them in their office, handled them without a licence. Proceedings this time are short and to the point ; there is no arguing and counter-arguing ; in a few minutes all the relative facts are known. "Did you not know you must not do this?" the judge asks. Yes, they knew, but one had a sick wife and child at home and needed the money.

The judges and his two aides, after dispatching a few more cases, retire to chambers to formulate their sentences—if one can use such dignified phraseology for three simple workingmen going into a tiny back room to discuss over cigarettes the merits of the stories they have heard. We go backstage and ask the judge a few questions. He receives us courteously, offers to give us all the information we want ; with his aides breaking in every now and again to supplement his answers or explain something that is not clear, he answers questions for two hours.

Judges are elected by their trade union or factory and first are lay judges only. Two lay judges sit with the judge

on every case. They are trained for three to six months, serve for ten days, and then go back to their ordinary work till called upon again. Those who show themselves especially gifted may go to law school for three or four years' training and then become regular judges ; but they must be elected afresh every year. Sometimes a lay judge may become a full-fledged professional judge with very little academic training, experience and practical work taking its place ; but this is growing rare. However, the Soviets do consider some other qualities more important than theoretical legal knowledge—common sense, fairness, generosity, the ability to decide on issues with the whole circumstances and conditions of a person's life in mind, a thorough knowledge of Soviet principles.

Judges do not have to be Party members but they are practically always proletarians. A judge of bourgeois origin could not put the interests of the proletariat first.

Justice in the Soviet Union to-day is openly and avowedly class justice. The Soviet lawcourt does not pretend to the liberal principle (fiction) of "impartial justice" ; it does not attempt to be above class divisions. The worker is usually favoured ; he has had less education, less preparation to behave as a materially well-off, well-fed, well-housed, and educated person should behave. The Soviet Government prides itself on being the defender of the rights of a class, the class that was underprivileged before. This discrimination will continue until the final goal of communism, the classless society, is achieved. Then, say the philosophers of communism, it will be possible for impartial justice to become a fact.

We asked the judge, "What are the most frequent cases now?" For although so many of the causes of disputes in capitalistic countries have been removed, there is a great deal of litigation. Statistics are not available for recent years, but recourse to the law is thought to be increasing. In 1926 there were over 2,000,000 cases in the People's Courts, of which roughly 180,000 dealt with breach of contract, 140,000 with damage to property, 100,000 with divorces. In the same year 1,500,000 criminal cases were

tried of which 100,000 were trials for malfeasance in office by government officials.

Crimes of violence have decreased, as have attacks on persons and property, which were widespread during the civil war. Murder is rare ; only one murder had come up before our judge in two years, and that was committed by an insane man. Murders of passion are treated with severity, those caused by old ideas, such as "protecting a wife's honour" by murdering her lover, drawing the highest penalty. "We consider jealousy a low motive, meriting the strongest condemnation, nothing to be proud of," said the judge. "A murder of jealousy may be punished with the maximum sentence." There are a good many cases of hooliganism, that is, breaches of the peace, drunkenness, general disorderliness. Thieving is frequent, particularly in districts where there are railway stations. Here the besprizornie used to commit many of their depredations. The talkie *Road to Life*, which has been shown in the United States, gives graphic pictures of their quickness and dexterity in making away with unwary travellers' luggage. Among women the usual crimes are cheating, deceit, theft ; but there are fewer women criminals than men. There is some forgery, embezzlement, and speculation. The majority of cases met as one wanders in and out of lawcourts seem to be either alimony cases or disputes caused by the overcrowded housing conditions.

There is a good deal of litigation between various Soviet bodies, of a kind unlike any in America. A factory sues a railroad union for holding up cars ; unions sue one another for not delivering goods on time. People fired from jobs may sue the person or organisation that fired them. A woman teacher who had written up in a wall newspaper her disapproval of the wife of the director of the school for striking a child had been subsequently fired by the director. She was suing for reinstatement.

The nature of crimes committed has changed in the last fifteen years with the rapid and radical changes in life, but also the acts called crime have changed in Russia. During the blockade, for instance, when there was a great scarcity of food, the forgery of bread cards became a serious offence,

but during the NEP period, when the scarcity was overcome, this offence became negligible, and a tribunal would sentence very leniently, if at all, any one who did it.

During the civil war there was an outbreak of crimes of violence which abated when conditions settled. In the NEP period there was much speculation ; it had to be tolerated, though the Nepman was a social outcast. With the Five Year Plan and the re-embarkation on socialist construction money speculation became a serious offence once more. And in recent years much hitherto relatively harmless behaviour has become criminal. As it became more and more necessary to increase the productivity of industry, carelessness or neglect in a factory or on a railroad, dangerous conditions in mines and factories, accidents, all became punishable offences. Engineers held responsible for railroad accidents have been imprisoned or shot. The personnel of whole departments in factories and on farms have been arraigned before the law for failure to produce their quota of automobile parts, sugar, eggs. American engineers have told me they hated to lay responsibility or blame for harm to machinery or accidents in factories to certain men, fearing they would get severe penalties.

One more question we had for our judge, the ex-railway worker : What about lawyers ? Are there any private attorneys ? Who are they and how are they paid ? There is a College of Defenders to which lawyers belong. They are paid by the state, the Party maximum of 300 roubles a month (now raised to 750 roubles), and they have to take any cases brought to them unless they can show cause why they shouldn't, such as relationship to one of the parties. In addition, there are public consultation bodies attached to the courts that give advice free of charge. One sees women with babies in their arms asking help in tracing a husband who has left home and is not sending his alimony, or trying to discover what are their rights in the room they had occupied jointly but which after the divorce they would like to have all to themselves. Very often, however, on account of the housing shortage, a divorced couple cannot find another room and have to go on living in the same room

separated only by a curtain, the essential to every Russian apartment.

Few private lawyers remain. They have not been abolished as a class but they do not find their calling very attractive, since a private lawyer is disdained by the court and does not stand a very good chance with his case. Those private lawyers who did not wish to join the Co-operative College of Defenders have mostly taken up other work.

We had finished our questions. There were to be no criminal cases to-day, although these are tried in the same courts and with little more formality than the civil cases, except that one militiaman is in charge of the prisoner. All cases except capital offences are tried in the People's Court, but there are higher courts of appeal. The decision in the People's Court is by majority vote ; it may happen that the two lay judges overrule the judge's opinion. The minority member has the right to embody his opinion in the decision, however, and if the case is taken to the Court of Appeals the minority opinion is taken into consideration.

We went back to the courtroom. In the judge's chair sat now an efficient-looking bobbed-haired young woman, a worker in a motion-picture factory, already re-elected three times to her judgeship. Next to her sat an elderly working woman, and on the other side the tram conductor of before. The first business was to read the sentences on the morning-session cases. The young woman who had caused such commotion in her apartment was given two months to find another apartment ; the military offenders were sentenced respectively to three months with deduction of some pay and four months' labour with deduction of all pay.

The young woman now turned her attention to the case before her. A deaf unshaven workingman was accused of selling cigarettes at higher than the official price. His defence was that the price was not higher, but the old woman lay judge quickly caught him up ; she was a worker in a tobacco factory and she knew the price of tobacco. His lame excuses were quickly ripped to pieces and he admitted that he had made two or three roubles' illegal profit. The accusing

witness was a militiaman who had seen him selling at the railway station.

Again, almost before we knew the case was over, the actors in the next drama, a young man and woman with a baby, stood before the bench. Question and answer fired rapidly. Name—age—social origin—work—children ?

"Is he your registered or unregistered husband ?"

"Unregistered."

The husband pleads as excuse for his nonpayment of alimony that he is out of work.

"Why are you out of work ?" The husband, a boy of perhaps twenty, stands inarticulate, embarrassed, silent.

"What is your work ?"

"I have no work."

"Why not ?"

"I am ill."

"What is your disease ?"

"I have neurasthenia."

"What right had you to have a baby if you are a neurasthenic ?" comes sharply from the chair. "Don't you know the state wants healthy children ?"

The wife breaks in excitedly : "He says he won't work on purpose, so that he won't have to pay for the child. He says that if he finds work he will conceal it."

"I am willing to pay 20 roubles a month for the child," says the boy sullenly.

"But how can you, if you have no money?" asks the judge.

"I have a pension of 26 roubles a month."

"But how can you live on 6 roubles ?"

"I only left work a week ago."

"How much did you earn then ?"

"A hundred and twenty roubles a month."

Judge, severely : "Don't forget the child is always protected by the state and you must reveal the truth about your income."

Husband : "I am willing to pay 20 roubles."

Wife : "I am willing to take 20 roubles."

Judge : "Very well. But keep an eye on him," she admonishes the young woman. "As soon as your husband gets work

again, be sure and find out what he is earning. You can get more than 20 roubles if he is earning more. Just come back to the court and ask for an increase."

They turn round and go, the man slouching out, the girl half defiant, half on the defensive. A girl witness comes to the table and asks why she wasn't called.

"It wasn't necessary," snapped the judge. "Next!"

From every kind of plant and factory these worker-judges come, men and women of all ages; here a lathe-turner, there a watchmaker; a sailor, a woman bricklayer, a tractor-driver. All had lived and worked among workers, the illiterate, the poor; they knew their lives, their problems, their hardships and temptations. I went to many Soviet lawcourts and saw many judges at work. Usually they were easy-going and tolerant individuals; the least tolerant were the young women. They appeared afraid to be thought too lenient, to be deemed unequal to the task of dispensing justice. "That is because they are unused to their authority as yet," explained an elderly judge, an ex-attendant at a hospital for the insane.

Lenin especially desired that as many people as possible, and especially the poorest inhabitants of the country, should assist in the administration of justice. If they thus participated in the administration of government, he thought, workers and peasants would more readily identify themselves with the state and would more readily learn the science of political power. In 1927 it was estimated that about half a million workers and peasants had already had experience of the administration of law.

One young peasant girl told how she had had only a primary education, but had taken a year's course in the law. "But our examinations test us for common sense rather than for book knowledge," she said. "Of course we have the codes, to which we can refer." And she pulled them out of her brief case, booklets little more than pamphlets: the criminal code, the civil code, the land and labour codes, the family and marriage code. "They have been many times revised since our Revolution," she went on, "for our conditions of life

change so rapidly. But these codes serve only as our guide-posts; we do not follow them rigidly. Always we take into account the social origin of the delinquent, and the social conditions under which he committed his crime. It's not easy to be a judge." A smile came into her strained face. "You have to weigh carefully all the aspects of the case, and we in the Soviet Union cannot go by precedent. All the law of Czarist days is wiped out. With us now every case has to be judged according to its special circumstances. And sometimes your judgment and sympathy tell you something different from what the facts seem to show. That makes a struggle. But always I hold close to one principle—the interests of society come first."

Crime, according to the Soviet criminal law, is the outcome of the antagonisms existing in a society divided into classes; it is always the result of a faulty social organisation and bad environment. The word "punishment" is not approved of; it has been replaced by the phrase "measures of social defence." To inflict physical suffering is strictly forbidden; flogging or any other measures that "lessen human dignity" are prohibited. Article 26 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (1925) reads: "Sentences, being a measure of protection, must be free from any element of torture, and must not cause the criminal needless and superfluous suffering." Article 9 of the code reads: "The measures of social defence do not have for their object the infliction of physical suffering nor the lowering of human dignity, nor are they meant to avenge or to punish."¹

When I asked a prison governor whether handcuffs or fetters of any kind were used, he laughed and said: "We keep those old-fashioned instruments of torture in the museums." And indeed in visiting many prisons, one does not see these instruments, nor have I heard any visitor report their use.

¹ Compare with this decree Article 978 of the *Jail Manual of the United Provinces, India*: "Labour in a jail should be considered primarily as a means of punishment and not of employment only; neither should the question of its being highly remunerative have much weight, the object of paramount importance being that prison work should be irksome and laborious and a cause of dread to evil-doers."

Sentences are short and once the sentence has been served the miscreant is readmitted into everyday life with no sting or scar of shame, no brand of having been a "convict." The maximum sentence for a nonpolitical offence—murder—is ten years; most prison sentences run two to three years. Any sentence of less than a year's imprisonment is not carried out; the offender is left at liberty and perhaps fined. But there are other sentences, ranging from severe public reprimands to fines (usually deducted from pay) that seem to affect the delinquent as deeply as a prison sentence.

A girl member of the League of Communist Youth who lived in a tiny stuffy cubbyhole that absorbed all the odours and steam from the kitchen, broke into a neighbour's room to sit there in the evenings while the owners of the room were away on holiday. The court's sentence for this offence, public reprimand by the girl's district committee, reduced the girl to tears; she sat sobbing in the courtroom until the judge and audience nearly sobbed with her.

Measures of social defence are: 1. Death by shooting; 2. Banishment; 3. Deprivation of liberty, maximum ten years (before 1922 the maximum was five years); 4. Compulsory labour without total deprivation of liberty; 5. Loss of civic rights; 6. Dismissal from office (for officials); 7. Prohibition to practise a particular profession; 8. Confiscation of goods; 9. Public censure; 10. Fine.

The law forbids absolutely any judicial measures of correction for children under fourteen. For juvenile delinquents from fourteen to sixteen years a special Juvenile Commission sits, consisting of a doctor, a pedagogue, and a judge. Party members receive usually more severe sentences than those who are not Party members, and are dealt with by the Party cell except for criminal offences.

Soviet criminology seems to assume that the "criminal" is not a criminal. He is not to be treated as an outcast, not to be punished for revenge or retaliation. He is an "unfortunate," sick, weak, or maladjusted, and must be trained to become a social being, a functioning member of society. This theory is carried out in practice in the communes run

by the OGPU.⁸ There are two near Moscow, one for murderers, the other for lesser miscreants. I visited the latter at Bolshevo.

Bolshevo lies in the midst of pine woods about two hours from town. It is not called a prison, a reformatory, or an industrial school, and the stigma those names carry does not attach to it. It is called a Rehabilitation Colony. The Director is a Red Armyist, his chief assistant a well-known doctor.

Kusnazore, the director, looked little like a soldier and less like a member of the dreaded secret police. He was young, kindly faced, smiling. The day was hot and he wore his uniform unbuttoned at the neck and his cap thrust back on his head. He sat in the wooden summerhouse comfortably, easily, nonchalantly telling us of the work of the colony. Forty or fifty boys and girls, mothers, some of them suckling their babies, and a few children hung over the wooden railings listening to their "warden" tell us of the arrangements for their training and welfare. Every now and then they would corroborate his account with nods, or interrupt to add a point. "Their presence here shows you I am describing things correctly," smiled the director, and to them: "Please stop me if I do not."

"I did not want to come here at first," he went on. "I did not know anything about boys or about criminals. And I knew it would be very hard work. I had never been anything but a Red Armyist. But now I have been here two years and I shall stay. It is my life work." Quite simply he said this, as the Russians do say and do things simply, without pose or pompousness. Then he got up and offered to take us around the place.

The colony was started in 1924 with a small group of prisoners brought out to organise shops. Out of this handful the present colony grew, till there are now over a thousand men and women, from eighteen to twenty-six years of age,

⁸ The OGPU (also called GPU) is the State Political Administration, one section of which is secret police. The remainder are uniformed officials at railway stations, frontiers, customs houses, etc. The Cheka was the Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-Revolution, Sabotage, and Speculation, and operated in the earlier years of the Revolution; it was dissolved in 1921, the OGPU being its successor.

being taught trades and a new slant on life. One sees no guards, no cell blocks, no walls, no convict uniforms, no bent heads. The men are at work with their shirt sleeves rolled up. Men and girls mix freely. The buildings, dormitories, dining-rooms, workshops, are low whitewashed bungalows or cottages. Doors and windows are open; there are no bars nor wires nor fences. The single men sleep in dormitories, the married couples have separate cottages. Any prisoner may marry, either another prisoner or a girl from outside. So far there are only a hundred women in the colony. "We are combing the prisons for more," said our guide, "but there are not many women in our prisons now."

The chief articles manufactured are sports goods. This is a new industry for the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, since Russia was never an athletic country. The boys enjoy making these goods; there is a sense of adventure in turning out rackets, skates, skis, footballs, and boxing gloves. And that was the reason for this industry at Bolshevo. "We wanted to get our boys interested in their work, give expression to their sense of adventure. The ordinary work in prison camps, in jute mills, at stone quarries, making mail bags, is deadening, stifling routine work. We want to keep alive energy and imagination." But the practical objective is not lost sight of either. "We have two policies," said the director. "One is to re-educate thieves who were forced into stealing by unequal conditions still existing in our Union, the other to satisfy the market for sporting goods."

A town is being created around the colony so that those who want to stay after their sentences have expired may settle there permanently. "The men will have their wives and families here, they will be bound by long ties to the commune, and they can earn their livelihood here, in the country, away from town and temptation," said Comrade Kusnazore. "Indeed, so popular is our colony becoming that some thieves come here and give themselves up, and others commit crimes just to be brought here."

Nevertheless the conditions of life are rigorous. The first year they come the "prisoners" are confined to the grounds; they are apprentices and are paid very little, just enough to

cover food, lodging, clothes, and the cost of instruction. At the end of three months the pay is raised, but any debts incurred during the first three months must be paid off. "Since a thief likes to dress in flashy style, show off, and get drunk," said the director, "the small pay is a hardship." But wages are being revised at present to reach the level of trade-union rates. Education, dental and medical attention, and holidays are free, as everywhere else in the Union. During the second year at the colony all restrictions are removed.

Education, physical, moral, and mental, is carried on all the time. The illiterate are taught to read. Physical culture is a big item in the daily routine. The colony has its club, little theatre, cinema, musical and literary circles, and of course crèches, kindergartens, schools, libraries, and the other cultural adjuncts so important in Russia. Vacations of a fortnight a year are granted on full pay, and the men go away without guard or escort. "But don't they stay away?" one asks incredulously. "There are not more than 8 to 10 per cent of departures," answers the OGPU man, "about as many as the escapes from ordinary prisons. We never follow a man. He will either fall into crime again, in which case he will be caught and taken to prison, or he will go back into normal life and earn his livelihood honestly, which is all we want." A man who takes to stealing again cannot as a rule return to the colony; a few, however, have begged so hard—and their relatives plead for them too—that some exceptions have been made. One man jumped out of the window of his city prison, risking his life, in order to run back to the colony.

In charge of the colony are seven paid instructors, three Red Armyists who have served in the active army and know army discipline, and three "prisoners" advanced from among the men. There is a tone of equality between men and officials. The men ask the authorities advice about what shirt to buy, how to deal with bothersome relatives, what girl to marry, as unconcernedly as they might ask one another. The colony has self-government. The Conflict Commission, made up of prisoners only, sits in judgment on all infringements of rules—hooliganism, drunkenness, stealing, "departures."

Although no officials sit on the Conflict Commission, they may interfere to advise leniency, for prisoners, like children, tend to inflict heavy sentences on one another. But they rarely command, and they interfere with the men's self-government as little as possible. Penalties are strict confinement to the room for a period, abolition of all privileges such as days off, use of the club, etc., and exclusion from society—social disapproval, that potent weapon of correction in all the Soviet Union.

There is a vodka shop near Bolshevo to which the men are allowed access. Numbers have come home from visits there drunk and disorderly, and have raised a row, stolen or got into other trouble, or even run away. The Conflict Commission, after inflicting repeated and severe penalties, asked the authorities to close the shop. The authorities refused. The law allows vodka to be sold and it is up to the men to re-educate themselves, not merely be legislated into good behaviour, they said.

As we walked about the grounds, passing groups chopping wood, painting, cleaning out cottages and dormitories, there was an atmosphere of ease and easy-goingness about the place. When I took photographs groups ran up to give me their names and ask for copies. One soft-spoken man with a neat silky brown beard and gentle eyes was introduced as the teacher of mathematics at the club. "He is an artist," proudly announced the young director. "Yes, I was always that," said the man ruefully, "even in my stealing days."

In one of the workshops a girl came running up to the group of visitors. We were Americans! Was there a doctor in our party? Yes. Oh, praise be to Lenin! She had heard that there was a remedy for tattoo marks. Did he know of one? The doctor stepped up and she shamefacedly uncovered her shoulder to show a large tattoo of a cross. Thieves tattoo themselves in Russia as sailors do elsewhere. This girl was particularly ashamed, because she had given up both stealing and religion. When the doctor told her it could be removed she was delighted. "My sentence will be over soon but I'll willingly stay here another two years if you can wipe out this mark!" she cried.

Courts in the Soviet Union exist not only to dispense justice. They are a tool of propaganda and education. The state is not unaware of the peculiar drama of court trials; the Menshevik trial of 1930 was broadcast over the entire Union, so that even children followed and could understand it. Judges use the bench as the teacher might use a school-room desk.

A young man was accused of drunkenness. He had used insulting language to the militia; a militiaman had hit him in the face.

"But only after he hit me!" shouted the militiaman excitedly. "I..."

"You lie!" interrupted a witness. "I saw you hit him first. You should have waited till the man had smacked you."

"He was cursing the Soviets all night in the jail!" cried another, and a fourth: "But he can't be so bad, his wife defended him and asked to spend the night in his cell."

The judge halted the turmoil, and came to the heart of the squabble. "How can you be a good worker if you drink?" he asked the young man severely. "If you go on like this you will be all the time at the militia, making trouble; you will grow quite conscienceless." That was the core of the case, though not of the legal squabble; the judge could act on the knowledge that the contradictory accusations of the witnesses were unimportant.

Another case was that of a man who had struck a militiaman with his fist. At this complaint the audience in the courtroom tittered.

"Citizens at the back," snapped the judge, "if you talk I shall fine you. It is no laughing matter; a Soviet official is concerned."

"The militiaman shouted at me!" shouted the accused.

"Never mind, you're a hooligan," answered the judge.

The militiaman was called. "It was my day off..." he began.

"What had you been doing?"

"Nothing."

"Go and get a paper signed by your district chief to show

that you were not idling on your day off. Case postponed." Thus the court demonstrates that it will tolerate no breaches of discipline by Soviet officials. They should set an example.

Political considerations openly influence decisions. An alimony case came up. A woman with a baby accused a certain man of being the father. He denied it and passed the accusation on to a kulak. "The woman cannot know," he says. "She entertained hundreds of men." The judge looked perturbed at this statement, since the village from which the complainant came had only eight hundred inhabitants; when it was corroborated by witnesses that the woman had had relations with the village kulak, his prejudices as well as those of his lay helpers were visibly aroused.

One can almost see the fluctuations of feeling in a judge as his human sympathies are called out first by one side, then another. In all cases the final decision rests not with the codes, with precedent, in legal technicalities, but with "the revolutionary conscience of judges." And the judges know it.

Soviet courts deal with their cases rapidly and simply. Arguing lawyers, disputes on the technicality of the law, the buying of witnesses or expert medical testimony, are as yet absent. Litigation has not yet become so expensive that for lack of funds people cannot go to court. "Expensive justice is often no justice." . . . "Justice delayed is often justice denied."—these comments which have arisen out of the practice of justice in the Western world are not applicable in Russia. Delays there are, but they are the delays of inefficiency and of red tape, and they hit all alike; they are not purposely caused by one side or the other to influence the final decision, nor are they due to economic inequalities.

It is true, the codes are still new and as yet cases fairly simple. The laws are closely in touch with social and economic life. Will the "legal mind" develop in Russia; will the codes continue to be easily changed? Will decisions come to be based on precedent, on legal technicalities? And when precedents have been established, will the codes grow out of harmony with social and economic conditions? These questions cannot be answered now. All one can state from

observation is that there seems to be a simple and genuine interest in justice, that the community has faith in its legal procedure. People are conspicuously law-abiding. I have heard a tram conductor soundly berate a passenger for getting on the tram at the front, particularly when she discovered that the passenger was a Party member. "You, who help make our laws, you break them!" the conductor cried, and the audience in the tramcar applauded.

The civil and criminal codes of the old régime, the formalities of Western law courts, have been abandoned. In the Soviet People's Court one has a sense that simple people are passing on the quarrels, disputes, and delinquencies of simple people, that common sense dictates procedure rather than rigid law, tradition, or the desire to get convictions.

CHAPTER XIV

RULERS FROM INFANCY

Work is not "work" to the Soviet child, it is play; and play is not "play," it is life.

Russian children are brought up on the same materials that compose the life of the grown-ups. They lead as imaginative lives as other children, but the romance is rooted in reality. To build a factory, run a railroad, or dig a mine is to them as glorious an adventure as to escape scalping by red Indians or to rescue princesses from wicked witches.

"It may be that another generation, accommodating itself more adequately to the stress of life, will look for inspiration not in a flight from reality, but in an eager acceptance of it," says Somerset Maugham in *Cakes and Ale*. That has happened in Russia. Work is not "work" to the Soviet child; it is play; and play is not "play," it is really and truly. The joy and excitement of life, its romance and beauty, can all be found in earthly expectations.

Russian education is to make of the child a self-respecting, assured, and conscious citizen at home in the world, a functioning happy individual—the type of person called in Russia "a concrete." It starts in the kindergarten. In their little Lenin Corners the small children learn their ABC's from posters issued by MOPR.¹ A is for Atheist, whom the priests try to kill; C are the Chains that bound class-war prisoners. D is the death, the legal lynching by a dried-up old New

¹ Initials of the International Workers' Aid. MOPR is the Russian section of the international organisation for the relief of political or class-war prisoners. The International Labour Defence (I.L.D.) is the United States section of the organisation.

England judge of brave class-war prisoners—Sacco and Vanzetti. M is for Mooney still a class-war prisoner in a California prison. T are the trials that are usually a frame-up and a farce, carried on by all the pillars of the ruling class. And so on. The pictures with these letters are as interesting to the Soviet child as the Antelope that is for A or the Monkey that stands for M in the animal ABC's, which exist too.

The new schools of Russia carry out a communist education. They work with the environment in town and village. Model schools set an example. One such is the Shatsky School, an educational experiment that according to many foreign observers and educationists embodies the best features of education in any country.²

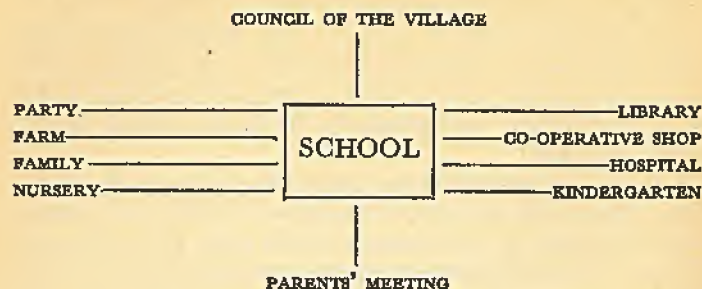
Founded by Professor S. T. Shatsky, it is called An Experimental Station for Communist Education. The actual experiment is carried on at the small country village of Kaluga, a night's ride from Moscow, but the headquarters are in the capital. There Madame Kirichka of the People's Commissariat of Education, co-worker of Professor Shatsky, runs an explanatory exhibit and supervises the training of the young peasant teachers.

The school takes part in all the activities of a collective farm. The children plant potatoes, reap the harvest, feed the chickens, calculate wages. They learn what it means to be a member of a kolhoz; to know from experience the agricultural problems and difficulties of the new socialist life.

Even as far back as 1911, when the school was founded, it was based on new educational principles. Teachers and children did all the work; no servants were kept. This was revolutionary for those days. But the peasants took little interest in the school and no part in its activities. The Revolution gave Professor Shatsky the opportunity for which he yearned. He was free now to carry out his original plan: to intertwine school and community in order to educate both. Now he could do it from the foundation up instead of piecemeal; there were no "interests" to stop him.

² A detailed description of this school may be found in Thomas Woody, *New Minds: New Men?* MacMillan, 1931.

The diagram illustrates how the school is the centre of village activities.



All school projects help along some community work. The children help to keep the roads clean, the village fire-engine in order, the trees and vegetables free of parasites. They clear away rubbish piles, and teach adults to do the same. They do very much what the city council of a small village does. But also they "liquidate" the illiteracy of their parents, teach them hygiene and the care of children. In Kaluga they spent a year on women, getting them to regard themselves as human beings, not as men's chattels. When the water in the village reservoir was polluted, the children examined it with the help of their biology teacher, made recommendations to the sanitary council, and then constituted themselves a permanent body to go around with the sanitary inspector. Afterward they held an exhibit to show their parents what they had learned, the dangers of pollution and the growth of microbes. To hand on his knowledge as he is enlightened himself is one of the important duties of the communist child.

The Revolution has radically changed the attitude of children to parents. No longer is there an unquestioned right to possess, to dominate, on the part of the parent; no longer do children meekly accept the authority of their elders. The child has been freed from exploitation, as women, workers, peasants, national minorities have been freed. He feels no constraint in criticising his parents, especially if

these are ignorant, backward, illiterate, or "former" bourgeois people. In fact the revolt against the parent is a revolt against the unenlightenment of pre-Revolutionary days as well as one against parents as such. The division between a generation of parents and children in Russia to-day may be the chasm between two social orders. When the six-year-old, contemplating the icons on the log cottage wall, remarked, "Mother, it's really time you did away with those things," he was not criticising his mother as much as he was disapproving of an outworn habit.

Between Communist parents and their children there is less of a gulf. But there is the same sense that the child has a perfect right to criticise, that he is an equal. And Communist children do criticise or complain, quite calmly, without aggression or self-assertion, just as parents have always praised, blamed, or scolded their children. In one house where both parents were Communist workers, I found a wall newspaper, pinned up in the living-room, criticising the parents' shortcomings:

THEY DO NOT KEEP ORDER

In our flat No. 84 nobody keeps order. Housekeeper Maroosia Simionovna [the mother] doesn't. She washes the linen and hangs it in the kitchen to dry, and Papa smokes in the room and drops his ashes on the floor. This is not permissible in the thirteenth year of the Revolution and therefore I make an agreement of socialist competition with Papa and Mama: DO NOT DO THOSE THINGS.

Another item ran:

STOP SCOLDING

In our flat No. 84 lives Maroosia Simionovna [the mother]. Inessa [a girl chum] and I talk. She [M. S.] comes to us and begins to scold us, using bad words. For example, on March 31 Inessa took all the copies of *Rabotnitsa* [The Woman Worker] from the big room to her room. I took them away from her, and she lost her temper. Maroosia came in from the other room and began to comfort her and snap at me, saying: "What a miserable shame to treat a little girl like that, you wretched dog . . . !" I'll forget it this time but don't let her do such a thing again. If she does, she will find herself in the wall newspaper again.

The mother, a textile shock-brigader, was proud of her children's wall newspaper. She harboured no feeling of resentment. "The children are quite right," she said. "I should not lose my temper and call the child names, and the laundry should be hung in the courtyard, but I was too busy to go downstairs."

In the schools, kindergartens, and nursery schools the teachers try to foster an attitude of helpfulness between child and parent. The child should be patient with his backward parent, not aggressive, yet he should always seek to correct his or her backwardness. There are not yet many well-trained nursery-school teachers, and not all of them are tactful, yet there is little ill feeling between parents and teachers. One teacher explained it by the fact that Russians, especially the uneducated ones, have always had a great respect for education; a kindergarten teacher appears to them a superior being.

In addition to the respect parents have for the teacher because she is better educated, schools influence the family because mothers learn that the teacher knows about health, cleanliness, and hygiene. When small Nadyas and Petyas go home from nursery school and tell their mothers that they really must bathe them at least once every five days, the mothers do not take offence. On the contrary, they feel grateful to the nursery-school teacher who is showing their child the steps to a new and better way of life. One mother came crying to the school one day: "My child won't obey me, he won't go to school." The teacher asked why. "He says I must bathe him every five days," wailed the mother.

Parents are told why the school is against religion; and they, the parents, must educate their children on the same principles. It is hard for the child if he is taught differently at home. A three-year-old came to school with a cross on a chain round her neck. The teacher told her she should not wear it. The mother was very angry: "My child shall always wear this cross!" she cried. A few months later the child came to kindergarten without it. "You see the mother had learned," said the teacher.

Another mother set up a Christmas tree for her little girl,

warning her not to speak of it in school. But the little girl did. The teacher explained that it was not wise to cut living trees down and set them up in the house. "Trees have another purpose—to make tables and chairs. What pleasure did you have from this tree? It lasted only a few days, didn't it? It would be better to ask Mother to buy you a picture book; that will last longer." "Now that mother no longer makes a Christmas tree for her child," said the teacher. A little boy of seven whose mother also fixed a Christmas tree, was taught more ideologically. "The custom of Christmas, like other religious festivals and ceremonies, was introduced by the priests and the bourgeoisie in order that workers should not think about the class struggle."

The teachers themselves carry on "cultural" work among the parents, explaining to them the new ideas they seek to teach the children, especially those the parents are likely to disagree with. Parent-teacher meetings are held in all schools, dealing with problems ranging from the children's clothes, meals, and general health to the organisation of their leisure time, their home work, their political education.

Slogans pinned up in schoolrooms are directed at parents. *Affection is necessary to your child but kisses are dangerous. Do not take your child to church; do not put superstition into his head.*

The subject matter of discussions or disputes between parents and children do not differ very widely from those in other countries; the attitude toward them does. An "Agreement for Socialist Competition" between a schoolboy and his father might have been a list of New Year's resolutions of any schoolboy anywhere; the father's reciprocal agreement, tacit admission that he owed the same duty toward his son that he demanded from him, characterises the Soviet parent.

Alexander Timofeyev, a schoolboy, promises: 1. I will not miss my lessons in school. 2. I will not hitch on behind street cars. 3. I promise Papa to study harder. 4. I won't be late for school. 5. I won't smoke at school or at home. 6. I won't cut up in school. 7. I will prepare my lessons well. 8. I will read more books.

Yeremey Timofeyev, his father, promises: 1. I promise not to be late to work. 2. I will be a shock-brigade worker. 3. I will not miss any working days. 4. I won't drink vodka. 5. I will see that

my son has his meals on time, goes to bed early, does his school work well. 6. I will keep an eye on his conduct.

In Czarist Russia children of workers hardly attended school at all. Whole regions had no school except in the church, whole races had no written language. To-day there is compulsory universal education from the age of seven. Hundreds of thousands of new teachers are being trained. But there is still a great shortage of teachers; according to *Izvestia* of June 28, 1931, a hundred thousand more were needed then. And their quality is, in Russian terms, something "very much to be struggled with." They have to be turned out so quickly that there is not time to train them thoroughly. Many are but one leap ahead of the ignorant and superstitious peasants whom they teach; and they cannot spare leisure for more training because they have so much social work.

But the education of the communist child is one of the most important Soviet tasks. What is to be done? The question is one of those Soviet problems foreign visitors rarely envisage. And there is another: How is the child to regard his teachers? The Soviet child is faced with some contradictions it is hard for him to grasp. In the West the attempt to explain the grown-up world to children has been almost given up; the paradoxes of capitalist life are too difficult and confused to explain to the logical child mind. Many children are encouraged not to bother about grown-up affairs, to "live in a world of their own." In Russia no such excuse can be made, for the child has to be trained to be a small citizen. His attitude toward his parents can be moulded by the teacher. Who or what is to mould his attitude toward his teachers? Karl Radek, an observant critic, says:

The child is in a quandary. He sees that many of his teachers are not members of the Party, indeed that some can barely hide the fact that they are not enthusiastic about the new régime. [Teachers, as members of the intelligentsia, found it harder than workers did to accept the Revolution.] Yet the child is supposed to accept the teacher's authority.³

³ *Izvestia*, June 28, 1931.

Some children asked Radek (who has a small girl of his own) why their teachers didn't join the Party.

"The Party is an advanced organisation and will not accept every one as a member," answered Radek.

"If the Party does not consider him sufficiently advanced to become a member why should his words be law to us?"

"One must not force a child to give unlimited obedience to his teachers any more than one should allow a worker to put complete trust in the engineers," concludes Radek.

Since the parents cannot be accepted as infallible authority, even Communist parents sometimes drinking, beating their wives, or otherwise behaving in un-Bolshevik manner, there seems to be no authority a child can be asked to accept unreservedly. "Where then are we to find the authority without which education is impossible; where shall we look for its mainspring?"

Radek's own conclusion, based on an exhaustive investigation of Moscow schools in the summer of 1931, is that the children must take their political education into their own hands, and the leadership should be taken by the organised children, the little Oktobriionoks and Pioneers, who will be the Comsomols and Party members of to-morrow. "Only where there are strong children's organisations is there a firm fundamental guiding principle strong enough to influence all the children."

This throws education back on to self-government, the main principle aimed at in all Soviet educational institutions. Small strongly organised Pioneer groups in schools are to exercise the disciplinary powers the teacher used to wield. The Pioneers are closer to the Party than the teachers. Pioneer groups develop initiative and children will pay more heed to them, more swayed as they are by the opinions and judgments of their peers. "A school without pupils' organisations inspired by Pioneers is a school without a core," says Radek.

Some individual teachers do not encourage the Pioneers, preferring to have all authority in their own hands. But officially they are encouraged to take leadership in school affairs. They do much what monitors or bodies of student

government do, excepting that whatever the Soviet child does is related to his status as a citizen. He keeps the room clean because cleanliness is in itself desirable, but also because the first workers' and peasants' republic cannot function successfully, or set an example to the world, if its schoolrooms are dirty.

The tasks assigned the Pioneers any child can perform. Children are shown how the mite of each child's contribution will add up to a staggering whole. No Russian child need grow up with the feeling, "What I do can't make any difference." On the contrary, he is taught to believe that the whole scheme might fail without his individual contribution.

The smaller children—from two to nine—are organised into Oktobriionok groups. The organisation is considered a training-ground for young Pioneers, as the Pioneers are for the Comsomols and the Comsomols for full-fledged Party members. Some laws for Oktobriionoks are very simple elementary rules that any mother might teach her child :

1. Little Oktobriionoks are careful to be neat and clean in body and clothes.
2. Little Oktobriionoks like to work.
3. They strive to become young Pioneers.
4. They help the Pioneers, the Young Communists, the workers and peasants.

The most popular Oktobriionok song is heard in practically all kindergartens and wherever the very young are gathered together :

We are joyful children,
Our name is Oktobriionoks.
We do not like mere surface words.
Be ready ! We are always ready !

And as the American child in the American public school starts off his morning with a salute to the American flag and a singing of "My country, 'tis of thee," so small Communists start their day with a united chorus "*Fsiigda Gotov*" ("Always Ready").

In the school the Oktobriionoks have practically a monitor's

job ; they look after the blackboards, keep the room tidy, help other children who are backward, do any organising or arranging that is to be done ; altogether, lead in the tasks that the American public school designates as "training for citizenship." The report cards of the younger children in a public school in a Californian township, under "Citizenship Attitudes," carry this list :

This pupil : Plays freely with his fellows. Tries to play fairly. Helps with the work of his class. Depends upon himself. Tries to help others. Tries to be on time. Tries to use his time effectively. Takes care of his clothes and personal belongings. Appreciates the use of money. Uses carefully school supplies and property. Respects the property of others. Tries to follow the rules of health. Tries to be courteous at all times. Tries to follow the rules of safety. Readily admits mistakes and tries to make amends.

With the exception of the money and property clauses this list would, I imagine, be endorsed by Oktobriionok headquarters.

Since the old religious christenings have been abolished among Communists, a new Oktobriionok "christening" has on some occasions taken its place, for the liking for ceremony persists. The festivity is announced for a certain evening at the Workers' Club of which the parents are members ; there is a band and people wear their gayest. The baby is handed to a tiny Oktobriionok and is given its names and nominated an Oktobriionok. Then it is handed to a Pioneer, then to a Comsomol, and lastly to an adult Party member, fitting words being spoken in each case. So it is initiated into the Communist party.

The children take their membership in Pioneer and Oktobriionok groups very seriously. Once I found a small girl was not wearing her Pioneer scarf. I asked her why. "We're not doing anything worth being in the organisation for," she said contemptuously. "Last year we collected bags for crops, but this year all we've done is write a letter to German Pioneers and wait for their reply. Oh, yes, we have clipped articles from the Pioneer *Pravda*." Another little girl told me she wanted to join the Pioneers but she would not do so

until she saw what work they did ; " I don't want only to talk."

Lack of initiative and inactivity occur in any organisation, but for the most part the children's Party organisations are active both in choosing natural leaders among the children and in giving them responsible work. They teach early the value of organisation, and provide some of the drama and play-acting children love. It has been established by scientific inquiry that a Pioneer does take responsibility more readily than an "unorganised" child.⁴

Every summer Pioneer children go to summer camps in the country. The parents pay 10 roubles a month and the factories the rest. I spent a few days at one camp. There were about five hundred children. The camp leader was a Young Communist who had already spent six summers as Pioneer camp director. He had been picked by his local group to take this job and then sent to pedagogical courses in Moscow. He did the job well and was elected year after year.

In the camp many of the same activities are carried on as in boys' and girls' camps in America. The children do all the work of the camp, waiting on table, washing up, cleaning their rooms. On rainy days they stay in their Lenin Corner, which has a small library of books, toys, games, and if they are lucky a piano. They decide their plans and programmes themselves. This camp decided not to take their one day in five off until the Plan was fulfilled. Around a big stone barbecue place the Pioneers discuss their plans, programmes, and disciplinary measures. A child that has to be publicly reprimanded is dealt with here.

Each camp usually undertakes some special task that it will carry out during its month. Either they will "tow" some less successful camp (see Chapter IV), help on the farm, teach the peasants to read and write, or organise a traveling library. One group of fifteen- and sixteen-year-old girls arranged to take charge of all the little children on one kolhoz so that the women would be free to go to work. At

⁴ From replies to questionnaires sent out by the Kharkov Research Institute.

first the mothers did not trust them, but after they saw how well their children were cared for they were content.

The camp next to the one I visited needed towing. A detachment of twenty-five children went over from our camp to see what was wrong. Eleven children were invited back to stay a few days and see how ours was run. They arrived one afternoon, tired, dusty, with rucksacks on their backs, but lustily singing the Pioneer marching songs. Our children rushed out to greet them, take them to their quarters, and show them around.

Every Pioneer camp has also some Oktobronoks. These live in a separate house. Ten children form a detachment, which is in charge of a Pioneer, elected to the job. The Pioneer "nurses" look after the Oktobronoks all the time. After dinner, which the smaller children have separately, each takes her group to their living-quarters, where they wash their feet and take a nap. Pedalogues walk quietly through the rooms, unfurnished but for the little camp beds. As a reward for their hard work the "nurses" are sent on holiday to a sanatorium or rest house after their month, for four or six weeks. The director also gets six weeks' holiday after the camp breaks up.

Parents may come to visit their children five times a month. "But the parents are a great bother," said the director. "For instance, the other day one mother brought her little boy strawberries, but he had already had a lot that day, so next day he was ill in bed with a bad stomach."

Discipline at these camps does not present grave problems in spite of the number of children, chiefly because the children have work. When there is trouble the measures taken follow the lines of common sense and the best modern educational experience. At one time some boys proved unruly, refusing to work. They were offered job after job but nothing caught their interest. Finally it was suggested they should take over the entire care of the hogs. For some reason the boys were fascinated ; they stayed at the pens all day long and gave no further trouble. At another time all the children who refused to work were gathered in one house. The best workers from each job were sent there to influence the

recalcitrants. At the end of a few weeks this house was voted a shock-brigade group—the best-working group of the camp.

Usually the most responsibility and the most taxing tasks are given to the "worst" boys. A bold bad boy put at the head of some enterprise usually becomes a good leader. His energies have found a channel. A good boy may be made assistant to the wild boy. "The 'wilder' they are, the more responsibility we give them," said the director, "and practically invariably they make good."

I wanted to know what they did with spoiled children. "Very few of our children are what you would call spoiled," said the Comsomol. "We treat them much as we treat the wild boys, letting them see that they are not the only ones, but that every one is and must be part of a whole." One small boy who had caught my attention as a forward aggressive youngster had been one of the most difficult to handle. "His father is a teacher, his mother a psychologist, and he is a spoiled and only son, always the centre of everything. Here he must live as the others do, and they won't play with him if he annoys them too much. He has become quite social-minded," said the director. I noticed a little crippled boy leading a column of healthy Pioneers. He was to forget his disability; to have no sense of inferiority or difference from the other children. Therefore he led the column; and his eager pace showed how the theory worked.

The assertion is frequently made that what the Soviet child learns is "mere indoctrination." It is difficult to draw the line between what a child is "taught" artificially and what it absorbs from the environment. A child left to draw what it likes is as likely to draw a tractor, a crane, or an aeroplane in America as in Russia; but the small Russian child will connect these machines with the Five Year Plan, with the Seventh of November or the imperialist invasion. A number of children at Dnieprostroy were told to draw anything they liked; practically all of them drew the dam.

Some teachers who did not hold with the Soviet educational policy, who believed children should know only about "childish things," were given permission by the Government

to make an experiment. They could try out their theories in a special school. The children were told nothing about politics, given no anti-religious or socialist teaching, heard no propaganda. They read fairy tales, played with the old-fashioned toys, and their books were the old children's classics. When Christmas came, the teachers decided to have a surprise Christmas tree with lights, decorations, and a



"YOU ARE NO COMPANY FOR US: YOU ARE
TECHNICALLY BACKWARD!"

(Cartoon from "Komsomolskaya Pravda")

present for each child. The tree was decorated, lit, the doors thrown open: the children trooped in. They started at what they saw, gaped, but said not a word. They just stood, staring, not knowing what to do. Then suddenly they joined hands, shouted, danced together round the tree, and broke into—the "International," a song they had never been

taught nor told about in school. After this experience "we realised that things cannot be kept from the children when they are all around in the air," said the teachers, and they gave up the experiment.

Children critically appraise and pass judgment on current events. At the time of the Menshevik trial many seven- and eight-year-olds insisted on having the daily reports read to them in full. The commutation of sentence called forth a storm of indignation. "They betrayed our country." . . . "They would have condemned our workers and peasants to starvation." . . . "If we let them go they'll only do it again." Many such comments came from children.

They apply the ideology and policies of the day with amusing literalness. A little girl seeing a brood mare with foal, was nonplussed. "How is that!" she cried. "Then the cab-driver will have two horses, and he will be a kulak and will have to be liquidated!" Another child of seven, the daughter of a former Trotskyite exiled to Siberia, but now returned to favour, told me: "I used to be in opposition, because Trotsky was a great man, but now I see that that's not the right way. We must help the people who are working on socialism now—not stay outside to follow one man who was once our leader but is no longer with us."

I talked to many small children in Russia, asking them a few simple questions to see what ideas they actually were growing up with. At Dnieprostroy a little boy of six, son of a Communist engineer and his German wife, was eating his supper of salt herring and bread and jam:

"What is a Communist?" I began.

"A man who builds factories."

"Why do you want factories?"

"To build socialism."

"Who are the enemies of socialism?"

"I don't know."

"Who are they in Germany?" the child's mother prompted.

"In Germany? The bourgeoisie."

"And what are the bourgeoisie?"

"Damagers."

"What do they do?"

"They eat and sleep and take the money that the workman earns."

"Will there be a war?"

"I don't know."

"Is war good?"

"No, it's bad, because it kills people."

"If there is one, will you fight?"

"Of course."

"Why will you fight if it's bad?"

"Because it will be a war against the *bourgeoisie*."

"Do you go to church?" He looked up at me. Was I mad?

"No, I don't."

"Why not?"

"Because the church is a place for stupefying the people."

I asked a quiet, handsome fourteen-year-old boy, dark-haired and brown-eyed, with a serious intelligent face, who was playing with some other children in the courtyard of one of the new workers' apartments in Moscow:

"What is the difference between a Bolshevik and a Communist?"

"There isn't any. My father is a Communist but my mother isn't. But she agrees with them."

The boy then told the story of the Revolution, showing a detailed knowledge of the events of 1917, explaining the struggle between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. "The Mensheviks had not many followers," he said, "but the bourgeoisie were for them."

"Do you want war?"

"No," he said, "we don't want war, but if they attack us we'll fight."

"Whom might there be a war with?"

"Well, the bourgeoisie anywhere, the English or the Germans. . . . Just as in China the White Guards tried to take the railway, and we had to defend ourselves."

While this boy talked the others gathered round to listen. They were interested in what he was saying, and in the *Amerikanka* who was asking the questions. Sometimes they

interrupted, but only to make the exposition clearer. I must get it right.

One bright, freckle-faced boy was spilling over.

"Sure if there's a war we'll fight!" he burst out, grinning. "We'll all fight. I've had to fight my way all my life." Some boys sniggered. "I have," he asserted, "I was a besprizorni and I travelled from Irkutsk to Moscow alone when I was five years old. Well, not quite alone, then; my mother came along. But when I got to Moscow I ran away and lived with the besprizornie. Now I go to school. I ran away from the first school they sent me to because I wanted to work. Now I work as a carpenter four hours a day and four hours I do school work. I'm a Comsomol."

This I could not believe. My picture of Comsomols was of serious responsible boys, like the brown-eyed one; this street arab so obviously would get into hot water at every opportunity. But his schoolfellows confirmed what he said. He was a member of the League of Communist Youth and his special job at present was to enrol new readers for the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. His chums confirmed that he was a great little liar, but since he and every one else was aware of that they merely laughed.

"Who's the leader of this gang?" I asked.

"We haven't any leader, we work all together. We don't fight. Only if the kids come over from another house and attack us—just like in war—then we'll defend ourselves."

"Did you never have a leader?"

"Yes, I was the leader once," said the little cheeky one, a little crestfallen.

"But we kicked him out," shouted two boys scornfully.

"They kicked me out," he admitted. "I lied too much."

Afterwards I asked the brown-eyed boy whether the Comsomols wanted a boy like this in their organisation. "Of course we get some who are less responsible than others," he said, "but they learn in the organisation. Responsibility creates responsibility."

CHAPTER XV

THE SOVIET CHILD AT PLAY

In this rough and sometimes cruel circus world, we must watch the quality of our children's laughter.

—KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA

IT WAS on a boat going down the Volga that I first encountered the new Soviet baby. Walking the deck I suddenly heard the moan of a guitar, shrieks of laughter and loud clapping. Hurrying around a corner, I came upon a hilarious group surrounding two tiny white-faced creatures looking like twins of about three years. The father, a big, handsome, solid man with a shock of black hair, dressed like a proud worker from some factory—I afterwards discovered he was—leaned against the railings. The mother, small and anæmic, with white face and unwaved hair, was playing the guitar. The tots were singing, to the immense amusement of the crowd of holiday-makers, the songs of modern Russia. First Vanya, standing on the bench beneath a cabin window:

The priest is climbing the ladder to ring the bell;
He sings the same song as the kulak.
We need no priests and no churches;
Give us formaldehyde instead of that incense.
I had a good time until sunrise
And got up very late.
Tractor has run out into the collective fields.
Hear the loud song of the tractors!
Farewell, farewell, Hand Plough the Sorrowful. . .

A burst of laughter greeted the tiny reciter, who buried his head in his father's trousers and then asked for the

promised gingerbread. Lisa, less shy and wanting the cake as much, offered the next item :

SONG OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

Our factories have started work,
All machines are marching in step,
Tuk, tuk, tuk, buck, back. . . .
Bodies grow strong at the machines.
Ei, worker, sleep enough,
Then we'll fulfil the Promfinplan.¹
Tuk, tuk, tuk, buck, back.
Bodies at the machine grow strong.
In the Five Year Plan our factory
Will be the leader showing the way.
Tuk, tuk, tuk, buck, back. . . .
Bodies at the machine grow strong.

The crowd, many of them workers, thus admonished by these tiny slips to sleep enough and grow strong at the machines, roared and applauded ; when the children had been rewarded, though only after some coaxing of Vanya, who showed signs of preferring gingerbread without recitation, the two together burst forth :

PLATILETKA²

New plants are born,
Rows of kolhozi ;
We build the Five Year Plan in four years,
The Five Year Plan in four accomplish we must !

And because the crowd would not let them be, one more :

OCTOBER

We meet October.
We walk along the streets,
We beat the drums,
And we sing a song.
We will raise the red flag
And will shout hooray !
Long live our own Soviet land !

¹ The Industrial-Financial Plan.

² The Five Year Plan.

Was there any difference between these children and our own who might have sung " Little Miss Muffet " or " Christopher Robin goes hoppity, hoppity " on a similar occasion ? On the surface there seems little. Most Soviet children seem well proportioned, well grown, with healthy appetites and large solemn eyes. Their close-cropped heads and ill-fitting clothes may make them look less chic than middle and upper class children of other countries ; but they play as cheerfully and are full of *joie de vivre* and always seem usefully occupied.

But beneath the surface there are differences. Neat, trim, energetic Sidonie Chudnitzkaya, a teacher and psychologist attached to the Institute of Vocational and Experimental Psychology in Moscow, who has been a year in the United States, pointed to some.

" Our children think more than yours," she said. " I do not mean to boast ; it is just a fact I have noticed. Your children will have more skills than ours, for they have more materials, but they do not use their minds as much. For instance, they will read about children in foreign countries, about travels and so on, but they will forget what they have read ; it is unrelated to their lives. And what do your children know about the unemployed, about hunger, the class struggle, revolutionary uprisings, what the organised Church has done with religion, the causes of war—the realities of social life to-day ? Ours learn about these matters. And their thinking will offset their lack of skills.

" We do not believe a child must live in a world of its own. The child is part of a class ideology. This is why we attempt to make every moment in the child's activity, from nursery school on, connect up with a real situation. Children should know what is going on in their own town, their district, their country, the world.

" In the United States the child is in a group, but each child is regarded as an individual. What struck me very much in America was that there the child is thought of first in relation to the family. In the Soviet Union the child is related to society first.

" With you most things are still given to the bourgeois

child," she went on. "The proletarian child has many disadvantages. We are trying to wipe out such distinctions. We still lack many things, so we have to underprivilege some children; the proletarian children get the best and the children of the bourgeoisie are as yet less well off. But that is to be only temporary. We do not want any children to suffer."

Many Communists, including Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, have expressed strong objections to discriminating against any children.

"Our aim to bring up a collective-minded child, a child that develops itself for the good of the whole, is a new stimulus," said my educator, "and a new and practical way of developing a child." I suggested that the school-team spirit was a parallel. She agreed: "If class-consciousness and political and economic knowledge were added, there would be a parallel."

The Russian child is to be a social being, a citizen, from the start. This does not mean that childhood should not be a gay, joyous, happy period; Russians do not think that to know what is happening in the world makes the child old before its time. They think to understand the world will make of childhood a fuller, richer period. Some adults think they do overburden Pioneers and Oktobriionoks with meetings and responsibilities; but criticism is altering that.

Many means are used to acquaint the child with the aims and purpose of a socialistic world: books, toys, games, songs, projects in the nursery schools, excursions to factories and plants, children's exhibits, museums, libraries, reading-rooms, theatres.

It is the rule rather than the exception to find a children's theatre in the larger towns. The theatre for Young People in Leningrad has become internationally famous. The repertoire is divided into cycles to suit various age groups. Research laboratories study the effect of the plays on the spectators. Every month three hundred and fifty small delegates gather in this theatre to discuss theatrical problems and criticise the plays. Actors, directors, playwrights, psychologists,

and teachers attend the meetings. The children tell what kind of plays they want, how they should be performed, and go on to theoretical discussions of the place of art in a proletarian society, what the drama can achieve, what important social problems should be treated on the stage, propaganda versus art. "Good art is good propaganda!" I heard a boy of fourteen cry at one of these meetings. "Bad art is rotten propaganda. Any one who wants to say something he feels passionately, and says it so that other people will get it, is an artist. And he's making propaganda. As Pushkin did, and Shakespeare, and Beethoven, Schubert, Bernard Shaw, Gorki." The subject was belaboured for three hours. These debates are vital, living, boisterous affairs and altogether delightful.

The children write plays themselves or act in plays by adults. Sometimes they are only audience. The hope of the Soviets is to have no town or village in the Union without its children's theatre.

Russians seem to have a natural sympathy with their children, and though the child is still taught by some adults to call the stranger *totya* (aunt), "auntishness," at any rate spinster-auntishness, has disappeared from Russian educational institutions. One day some one woke up to the fact that museums were all wrong—dull, dowdy, boring places. And there were no museums for children! So Jacob Meksin, a tried and experienced pedagogue with a rare knowledge of children, was given the task of remaking the museums of Russia. Now they are springing up everywhere in large towns and small villages, houses in the library, the school, the local Palace of Culture. As a model for children's museums Meksin has set up the Children's Travelling Exhibit in a simple room in the People's Commissariat of Education Museum on Sretenska in Moscow.

The museums of the past have been revolutionised. "They were static," said Comrade Meksin. "In them 'you must not touch,' 'you must not go too near,' 'you must not lean over the rails'; you must bow in awe and reverence before pictures or busts or ancient vases that might mean nothing to you. And children were dragged through these mausoleums

to learn uninteresting facts about dates and names and periods. Of course they were bored ! ”

The children's Travelling Exhibit changes all that. It is not even called by so staid a name as “ Travelling Exhibit,” but “ Wandering Exhibit.” And it wanders from school to farm, from farm to factory, from factory to children's playground, letting the children themselves arrange the exhibits, explain them, and take part in the printing and the demonstrations.

The first exhibit to arrest the eye in the museum is a little stage-set called Times and Books. Scene One : You gaze through a show window, and there in miniature is a perfect drawing-room of 1776. A little boy in a spotless Mozart costume and plait sits at a table with his tutor, a book open before him, while in the doorway stands the varlet, also a small boy, in a cook's cap and apron, watching his luckier superior enviously. Above the show window a circular board is divided into four sectors, which can be turned ; it stands now at the sector devoted to the books read in that generation, heavily bound volumes with costly hand illustrations inside, such as *Fables de La Fontaine*, with no illustrations on the cover. The books are obviously very expensive and could only be afforded by a few aristocrats.

You turn a handle at the side, the stage revolves, and here is Scene Two : A merchant's family, with two children, still richly dressed, running to congratulate their mamma on her birthday, bringing bouquets and presents, and crying “ for the sentimental joy that their mother has a birthday.” Again, the books above, spread out fan-shape, are the books of that period ; better now, the pictures machine-coloured, but still not really children's books, and still expensive. They could not be afforded, for instance, by the cook standing in the doorway, with a wide-eyed little girl clutching wistfully at her apron strings.

Scene Three : A worker's family, deep in a dingy basement, the mother ironing with bent back and tense face, the child perched upon a table straining to read by the one dim light. And the books of that period ? “ Rubbish ! ” explained the organiser of the museum. “ Absurd stories about kings

and queens and knights, painted in crude and garish colours ; stories meant to keep the minds of the workers off the intolerable conditions of their lives.”

By this time quite depressed, one was ready for Scene Four : A large, light, airy, children's reading-room, the shelves stacked with suitable books, the little readers, children of workers and peasants now at last freed, sitting in comfortable chairs reading the best literature the world has to offer. Above this scene were spread out some of the delightful children's books of Russia to-day, cheap books that are within every child's reach and that cover all the possible range of interest of a child.

“ We teach only through the child's own interest,” explained the director. “ You will notice that there are no texts : ‘ Good Books,’ ‘ Rare Books,’ or ‘ Books Every Child Should Know.’ And so with all the rest of our exhibition. Everything follows the child's interest. Here for instance are the books illustrating socialist construction.” And he turned little gadgets so that the title of some book about radio, or flying, of Dnieprostroy, or oil, showed up. The child could move other gadgets and the respective picture, author, and other data about the book would show.

In other toys the child could learn about the lives of the great inventors of the past—Watt, Gutenberg—or the Edisons and Fords of to-day.

“ We learn facts about our children in this way also,” my informant went on. “ By noticing what books a child turns to first we learn where his chief interests lie. That will help us later on in vocational selection. The school is too strict to get good results ; the children feel shy there. At the exhibition the child is quite uninhibited, he is only playing. We have seen a child positively tremble when he came upon the subject closest to his heart.”

In addition to games that teach the child historical and scientific knowledge, there are books and exhibits to enable him to distinguish good printing from bad, good paper, the proper length and width of a page ; there is a printing press which the children operate ; and then the inevitable Good Manners in Reading section, including health and cleanliness,

so integral a part of all culture-teaching in the Soviet Union. One child had criticised a book adversely, and it was found that the pages were uncut ; another returned a book to the library with a note that it had been specially enjoyed because the reader was lying in bed with scarlet fever (and how the mothers jump at this exhibit !) ; another model shows a child reading while it is eating its dinner : "*What is wrong about this ?*"

Farther on in a Magic Cupboard are all the parts of costumes for Robinson Crusoe, Tom Sawyer, Middle Ages knights, red Indians. The child that can put the articles of apparel together correctly for one character, say moccasins and tomahawk and feather headdress, with no anachronism, is allowed to don the suit, and for a while to strut upon the stage impersonating the character he has chosen. It is unnecessary to describe the popularity of this "exhibit."

Other parts of this exhibition teach the children the rudiments of artistic appreciation. They are shown a number of pictures by different artists and told to select those they think are drawn by the same man. "We never laugh at them or get in the least annoyed if they put a Konashevich with a Lebedev," explained the guide. "We just tell them to look again. So it takes on the character of a parlour game." There are numerous other exhibits, to teach appreciation of colour, form and style of books, printing and bookbinding.

Before they leave the children are asked to criticise. "I dislike it that some children stay so long," wrote one small boy. "I have even seen the same child come back two or three times." Another's comment summed up the feeling of most : "What I like best is the printing press and the technical section, but most of all I like all of it."

One must not neglect the child's training from the earliest days, Communists say—that is, training in communist ideology. If social and ethical attitudes are formed in early childhood, then even the child's toys will help form those attitudes ; and so those toys must be right.

But it was found that no one had paid much attention to toys. They had been forgotten. Little Bolsheviks were still playing with the stupid old bourgeois toys and so running

the grave risk of imbibing bourgeois culture. The *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (the organ of the League of Communist Youth) discovered the calamity first, and with its usual vigour launched an attack on "Soviet Toy Deficiencies."

THE TOY CONTINUES TO AMUSE THE PHILISTINE

ran the first of a series of sensational headlines.

LET US MAKE TECHNIQUE THE FOUNDATION OF EDUCATION BRING UP A THOUSAND SOVIET EDISONS

There is great disorder in the children's world. The factory should produce toys that correspond to the aims of communist education. What does it do instead ? It puts on the market fat expressionless baby dolls with cross eyes, bright-painted clowns with big bellies, a rubber peasant with a whistle in his stomach, hares in trousers and cats in boots. That the toy directs the child's interest and creates certain conceptions in his mind, besides strengthening his social experience, is well known ; yet the main product of the toy market is Philistine family furniture, tables with mirrors, old-fashioned crockery, cradles and little babies. And the dolls are well-dressed young misses.

In this rough and sometimes cruel circus world we want to amuse our proletarian children ; but we must consider the quality of the children's laughter. These toys call forth neither laughter nor amusement among children. A really gay toy to sharpen a child's sense of humour and really please him, such is not to be found on the market. Instead you may buy toy tools nailed to a box, saws that don't saw, hammers that don't hammer. You will find religious images, children praying, but you will look in vain for modern toys to illustrate the new life and socialist construction. . . .

And as for the table games ! There is the game of gorodki [a sort of ninepins] but the ninepins to be knocked down are a grain elevator, a factory, a tractor, a combine ! Very educational, that. Or the Piatiletka game, in which four large industries, one in each corner, can achieve the Five Year Plan only by knocking each other out.

No ; one should not have to emphasise that the tasks of polytechnic education are closely allied to the technical toy, which forms the first step in the life of the future constructor. We have now a new consumer, the collective : crèches, kindergartens, nursery

schools, children's playgrounds. Those who bought few toys for their children formerly have now become the main consumers. To-day we need a polytechnic toy to make the child acquainted with materials and the fundamental principles of machinery. The proletariat does not share the patronising attitude of the aristocracy toward children.³

With the article appeared a photograph of a pop-eyed peasant doll : *A "New" Toy on Sale in the Shops !* and next to it a photograph of a mechanical conveyor : *But This Is Not on the Market.*

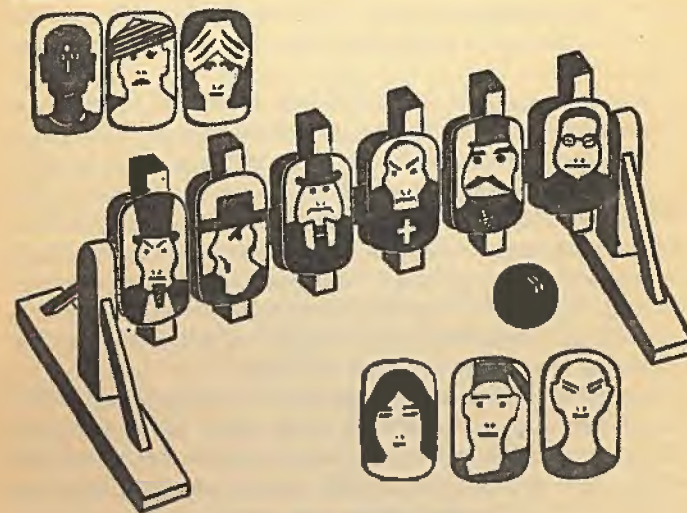
Six months later, however, it was. In November, 1931, the first exhibit of children's toys was held in Moscow. For over a year a commission, consisting of artists, painters, carpenters, teachers, psychologists, toy-makers, had sat to consider the new toy. The exhibition was the result of its labours. Here was a mechanical conveyor, the conveyor belt made of burlap. Two shock-brigades of little Pioneers were assembling toys : a wooden battleship, a tank, an aeroplane, and a tractor—each child adding a part as the belt went by. There was already socialist competition between the two groups.

There were other toys. A model of the Dnieprostroy Dam, made of unpainted wooden blocks, a kolhoz, some new-type dolls—Red Armyists, Pioneers, workers, and peasants. For the very young children there were large brightly coloured horses, red, black, and green with gold manes ; pedalogues had decided that small children preferred fantastic rather than realistic portrayals of animals. A new table game was a row of wooden targets with heads painted on them at which you rolled a ball ; the faces on one side were of the exploiters of backward races : American capitalist, Dutch and British imperialist, Mexican priest, French militarist, Chinese mandarin. When the ball hit the target it turned over, and behold ! the face of the exploited of each race : Negro, Javanese, Indian, Mexican peon, Moroccan, Chinese coolie.

The question of the right kind of toy or game for the child at the right age is as serious a matter as the right kind of

³ *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, June 23, 1930.

machine in a factory. Which toys are correct and which bad is taught by posters, exhibits at Institutes of Mother and Child, models at school and teacher-training colleges, lectures and books. Even the Museum for the Emancipation of Woman has a section showing correct and incorrect toys. All these spread to the loneliest individual peasant homes as well as to kindergartens and children's playgrounds the results of the most recent research on playthings for small children.



THE NEW SOVIET TOY

Official changes in ideology or state policy are incorporated in toys as soon as possible. Individual ploughs and the little peasant homes with their one or two wooden horses and cows must be taken from the market, be replaced by kolhoz and sovkhoz (state farm), with huge haystacks built by collective labour, and collective stables with all the cows housed under one roof.

At one time parents and teachers were admonished not to let their children play with soldiers, drums, pistols, guns ; children were not to become warlike. Now the child is given Red Army men, tanks, battleships, destroyers, submarines,

cannon. Older children are put through the drill connected with poison-gas attacks. For now Soviet children must be prepared for war, for the coming attack of capitalist nations on the first workers' and peasants' republic.

Their games also teach the children about politics. There are anti-religious lottos, "snakes and ladders," playing cards. In a Pioneer camp a game was being played about the German situation. One group of children were Social Democrats, one Communists, and the former were trying to prevent the latter from holding meetings. In the course of the game the various moves were explained from the Marxian point of view.

Their games reflect what children hear around them. A favourite boys' competitive game is Reds versus Whites, and gory pitched battles are fought or guerrilla warfare carried on. Fights are started by small boys who don't want to be Whites, and many are the humiliations of younger brothers who are made to be. Children build factories in the mud that are swooped down upon by saboteurs and counter-Revolutionaries. The trial of the Mensheviks was enacted on many a corner lot. Drunkards are brought to jail and strutting militiamen give them a sound scolding.

A concerted attack has been made—to use modern Russian phrasology—on the children's book front. What the subject matter of children's books should be, how they should be written, how to regard the child reader, are questions discussed to an extent that make teachers in other countries gasp. A catalogue of *The Hundred Best Books for Children* says :

Artistic literature should cease to be a means of recreation only. It should be serious and attractive for the child, and should inspire him with creative desire. Just as a child brought up on cereals only will not be healthy, so one brought up on the pap of simple and meaningless stories will not develop a strong and creative imagination.

Children's books are taken most seriously as a branch of that education which is the cornerstone of the building of socialism, of the achievement of all the Five Year Plans.

Social commentators in other countries say all hope lies in education. The Russians mean it. Writers of children's books occupy as important a position as builders of factories or the Commissar of Railways. They have many conferences. Every fortnight writers and illustrators of children's books meet with teachers, psychologists, librarians, artists, and literary critics in the Gosizdat. The new books are discussed from the point of view of ideology and the tastes and desires of the children.

Since Russians believe strenuously in the right of self-determination children themselves listen to authors reading their own works and are invited to comment. "Sometimes they take their rôle of expert with too much conceit," says Meksin wryly, "as when one group of ten-year-olds sent in a book with the remark: 'We have read this and have decided that, on the whole, it may be printed.'"

Careful lists are kept in kindergartens, children's libraries, and schools of the books read by children and of their notes and criticism. One such read: "This is too interesting, you can have a good cry over it." Another: "The most important thing he did not tell at all! Did the father buy the accordion for the child or not? For some daddies only make promises."

The production of children's books vies in quantity with the production under the Five Year Plan of coal, oil, and tractors. Every week a new sheaf of books appears; they are sold not only in every shop of the Gosizdat, but also at the many kiosks dotted about the streets. Every few months the best are already out of print, although they are published in editions of many thousand.

The best illustrators and artists are employed to write and illustrate books and compose the musical settings for children's songs. Taken to an artist's studio in Leningrad, large, clean, and comfortably furnished, I saw only still-lifes and nudes on the walls; no evidences of any connection with the Revolution, no posters or other "commercial work." I could not imagine what the artist lived on. When I learned his name I recognised that of one of the most prolific illustrators of books for very small children.

Soviet children are avid readers. They haunt the bookshops

looking at piles of the newest books ; and rarely does one leave a shop without buying. The modern picture book is as universally found in the fist of the small Bolshevik as the all-day-sucker is in that of the small American boy. Most children take their reading into their own hands and insist that their parents bring them home the new books. "My boys," a father of a six- and an eight-year-old told me, "ask for at least eight to ten new books every week, and nothing will put them off." Children take very seriously their new position of young adults, given them by the Revolution. Every one, except perhaps a tired or former bourgeois mother, conspires to have them know all about what is going on in the country. When a little girl of seven asked to have the political cartoon in *Pravda* explained and her mother told her she was too young to understand, she replied : "There is no too young. A child can understand anything if you will only explain it in terms that a child can understand."

The books for children foster such knowledge. Even for the tiny tots, for whom pictures without words are printed, such picture books bear on the life of to-day—Red Army parades, the new buildings of Moscow, the Park of Culture and Rest, life on a kolhoz. There are also, however, very charming picture books of animals, flowers, boats, circuses, which seem to have no visible connection with socialist construction. But one cannot be sure. The book on Moscow buildings, which is of cardboard and opens out, has on one side only the new workers' blocks, attractively drawn in child style by Chiffirin. Many picture books are serial stories, one called *Milk Factory* starting from the individual cow standing forlorn in a field and ending with great lorries bumping in every direction from the collective dairy to workers' homes.

How Beet Became Sugar, written and illustrated in bold sienna-brown and black by Olga Deneko and Nikolai Troshin, starts with tractor and plough turning up the furrows and muzhiks in high boots and leather jackets digging up the beets. It ends with dapper little workers in caps and open-necked shirts collecting sugar in sacks in a clean airy sugar factory. A jaunty little railroad truck stands puffing chirpily

at the factory gate ready to run along with the sacks whose contents will soon sweeten the tea for comrades on their return from work.

Many books illustrate the difference between Then and Now. The history of Georgia is told with each page contrasting pre-Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary customs. Marshak's *Yesterday and To-day*, illustrated by Lebedev, one of the best artist illustrators of children's books, reports conversations between the kerosene lamp of yesterday and the electric light bulb :

You silly old woman,
Your wick burns very weakly,
While from me pours a beautiful light
Because I am related to the heavenly lightning.

The pen dipped in the inkwell (and ink blots all over the page make everyone who turns to this page jump guiltily) complains to the typewriter :

I am old and rusty and tired
And ugly bugs float in my ink.
Our masters now have other pens
That hammer and shoot like artillery.
Commas, periods, lines, and letters
The crooked hammers beat out on paper.

And then there are Demian Biedny's riotous *Stari Kukli* (*Former People*)—Czar, priest, judge, gendarme, policeman, capitalist. The caricatures of these gentlemen's faces might have come from the pens of George Gross, Peter Arno, or Deni.

As soon as a child can read there are books on every aspect of life to-day ; historical, geographical, military, economic, social, scientific, political. World events appear reflected in children's picture books almost as soon as they are reported by *Pravda*. The story of Amundsen, with a shadowy portrait of the explorer on the cover, appeared in stacks everywhere while the ice-breaker *Malygin* was in Arctic waters with Nobile on board looking for traces of the explorer. The



"I AM OLD AND RUSTY AND TIRED
AND UGLY BUGS FLOAT IN MY INK. . . ."

ЗАБЫТЕ,
ТОЧКА,
ОТРОЧКА
ЕЩЕ КРИВЫЕ
МОЛОТОЧКИ.

ВДРУГ РАЗЪЕДЕТСЯ МАШИНА—
ЕДЕТ ВПРАВО ПОДОВЕНА...
ЧТО ТАКОЕ? ПОЧЕМУ?
НИЧЕГО Я НЕ СОЗДУ!



"OUR MASTERS NOW HAVE OTHER PENS
THAT HAMMER AND SHOOT LIKE ARTILLERY. . . ."
(From S. Marshak's "Yesterday and To-day")

catalogue of children's books covers the fields of social and Revolutionary books, science, production and socialist construction—among which appear such titles as *From Rubber to Goloshes*, *Gigant*, *Five Year Plan*, *How a Tool Made a Tool*—international, children's way of life, nature, games and behaviour, humorous books. There are amusing and moralising animal stories; one is called *A Besprizorni Cat*. Many books contain morals about little boys or girls who wouldn't wash themselves; the dreadful tale *Moi Dadir* by K. Chukovsky tells how all the household furniture turned against the culprit and ran away: food and forks and wash-basin and soap. When he repented they smiled benignly and returned, including shoelaces, chimney pots, sponge, and samovar.

There are innumerable books about Lenin, his childhood, his youth, how he spent his leisure; these are adored by the children. They seem to have a quite special and personal love for their "little Lenin," not at all the dry and perfunctory homage paid by most children to their national heroes. And indeed in these books he does appear a very human and lovable person.

Few Soviet heroes get such individual treatment. There is, however, a life of Gorki, illustrated by a wealth of source material worthy of a university thesis. The beloved writer is shown as a boy, a young man, in prison, abroad, talking to Soviet sailors, to shock-brigaders on their travels in Italy. There are facsimile reproductions of the newspaper *Kavkaz* of September 12, 1892, which carried his first article; of his secret-police documents; of a letter from Lenin. There is the little bedstead in his cell and the prison fortress from the outside; and then he is leaning out of a railway carriage window, being welcomed back to his fatherland. And Gorki's sad, hollowed, paper-wrinkled face breaks at last into a smile. The book costs twenty-five kopecks and a few months after publication had sold over a hundred thousand copies.

Of the books on the new factories the most attractive are one on Magnitogorsk, illustrated by photographs, and one on Dnieprostroy by S. Marshak, illustrated by drawings in a soft grey-green by Bibikova, and costing 35 kopecks. This

one tells the story of the dam even more dramatically than it has hitherto been told, and in a lilting rhythm that would be an Irving Berlin hit in the jazz world.

A man said to the Dnieper,
 "I will lock you out by a wall.
 You will jump from the peaks,
 You will turn machines."
 "No," said the water,
 "Nevermore, nevermore, never . . ."
 And now a stone wall is built in the river
 And war is declared on the river. . . .

Enter the adversaries in this war, the crane, that twenty-ton giant, the Sanderson drill, the steam excavator. "Where yesterday boats rocked, machinery has now started humming, where yesterday fish floundered, dynamite now blasts rocks and earth." And all for what? "That uselessly running water may bring bread to the workers and lights to their streets and houses."

Another industrial booklet makes living pictures of the graphs and statistics of the third decisive year of the Five Year Plan. Lines of tractors compare production figures for the last three years, miniature men loading bales of sacks give the grain figures, cotton's history is traced from camels with responsibly arched necks through rows of freight trucks to the factories belching red smoke. Even the growth of education is illustrated by nineteen million tiny figures moving toward the school gates in 1931. Another book, *Couriers* by Ruderman, gives the latest news bulletins from the industrial front (in verse): Turksib speaks, the Urals speak, Gigant speaks, and there are songs of the Magnet Mountain, a "Song of the Electric Engines," and a "Song of the Excellent Harvest." The drawings are in black and white by Baptiva.

Most attractive are the international books with their brightly coloured "brothers": little babies and children, Negro, Chinese, Indian, Mexican peon, Siamese, and Europeans of all nations. They are usually shown at slave labour, Negroes, hauling heavy loads, Indians picking cotton with

a martinet with folded arms watching over them, little Chinese girls dully spinning. And they end with the Red Star on their helmets, working side by side in the factories at last owned by themselves. One book on India has particularly attractive illustrations; it starts with men, women, and children bent over machines and ends with Russian Pioneers blowing trumpets and waving their hands to a smiling army of Indian children advancing under a banner saying *We Are Ready*. A racy little book on China tells all it has to say on the inside cover and then lets the coloured pictures unfold their own drama. "There is a far, far country called China in which the towns, the villages, and the children are not like ours." The occupations of the coolies are described and they are shown weaving reed mats, salting fish, turning the heavy water wheel or pulling the rich along in jinrikishas. The text remarks: "In China there is war all the time. The generals fight among themselves. The Revolutionaries fight the generals."

Then there are the books for Pioneers and Oktobriionoks. *The First of May* shows the children getting out a wall newspaper, marching on the Red Square, driving tanks and trucks, holding meetings with bright red and green banners; while on the left-hand pages the plot thickens in sinister blacks and browns, the former police and military listening outside stockades where workers are holding their meetings. A battle at the factory gates ensues; and the Pioneer runs off with the red flag and fastens it to the top of the highest lamp post. Victory!

For the Oktobriionoks, little Communists under seven, responsibilities are not yet so heavy. Nathan Vengrov tells in spirited verse illustrated by Chiffrin how they go out to the Soviet towns and what they see:

OCTOBER CHILDREN

The October Children went out to the Soviet towns,
Out to the Soviet towns.
There was noise on the scaffoldings,
Humming and buzzing,
Digging and building and laying of roofs . . .

To and fro,
To and fro,
To and fro.

Through field and village,
Through village and field,
Tractors went buzzing.
Ploughing, cutting, breaking up landmarks,
To and fro,
To and fro,
To and fro. . . .

Out went the October Children
Through the plants and the factories,
Through the plants and the factories.
In the furnaces was a humming and buzzing,
At the blast furnace a roaring and whistling.
The high furnaces snort,
Whistle and blaze.
To and fro,
To and fro,
To and fro.

Ideology and propaganda are as important in children's books as in those for adults. The many accusations of "propagandising even the poor little children who cannot protect themselves" levelled against the Soviets, are answered quite simply by Dr. Meksin: "After every great social and political upheaval the didactic nature of children's literature increases and the new class which has just achieved power wishes to inculcate a new ideology in the consciousness of its children. That is why we pay special attention to technical books in Russia now, translating such stories as those by the American writer Lucy Sprague Mitchell, *The Song of the Locomotive*, *How Water Got to the Bathtub*, *Skyscrapers*, and others." Certain old classics and folk-tales are being revived, "freed however from undesirable elements, fantastic events, superstition, and monarchical tendencies."

Ideology developed a spirited controversy around Chukovsky's riotous book *Crocodile*. The author, a critic and historian, is also a very popular writer of children's verse, in

the old style of *Struwwelpeter* or *Max and Moritz*. His books, particularly *Crocodile*, enjoyed the popularity of *Alice in Wonderland*.

One day a letter from Krupskaya appeared in *Pravda*. It said, very gently and tolerantly in the tone of most of the writings of Lenin's widow, that the ideology of *Crocodile* "is not for us now. It does not harmonise with our present attitudes. It glorifies the individual and makes the mass appear stupid." *Crocodile* is the story of the depredations of a wicked crocodile, who ate a policeman and a little dog and then freed all the animals in the zoo.

Once a haughty Crocodile left his home upon the Nile,
To go strolling off in style on the Av-e-nue.
He could smoke and he could speak Turkish in a perfect streak
(and he did it once a week),
This most haughty, green and warty, very sporty Crocodile.⁴

A little boy, Vanya Vassilchikoff, comes to the rescue of the terrified populace.

Everybody quaked and quivered, everybody shook and shivered,
Only One didn't quake, only One didn't shake;
Ready to fell any foe at a stroke, Vanya Vassilchikoff stood like an oak ! . . .

The beast at Vanya's behest, coughs up dog and policeman.

All the citizens turn out.
"Vanya, the brave!" they shout.
All the town brags, hurrah!
Fido's tail wags, hurrah!
Banners and flags, hurrah!
Merrily wave.
To reward him now there comes a
Hundred pounds of sugar plums, a
Hundred pounds of lollipops, a
Hundred pounds of chocolate-drops,
Luscious grapes by tons and tons,

⁴ This is the equally uproarious translation into English by Babette Deutsch, published with the original Russian illustrations by Lippincott, 1931.

Waffles, apple-tarts, and buns,
And—you'd think it was a dream—
A thousand portions of ice-cream!

All for one little boy!

It was only after the book had run into many editions and numberless Chukovsky imitators had sprung up that the *Pravda* letter appeared. Critics pointed out that if the style and subject matter of *Crocodile* spread it would lead writers of children's books down a wrong road. Chukovsky has written other books, some more "correct," such as the *Moi Dadir* already described, and *Fedora's Sorrow*, a tale about a peasant woman who wouldn't wash her dishes until they ran away from her and refused to come back. But that did not save him from criticism in this case.

Not all Communists take the same viewpoint on ideology. Lunacharsky, ex-Commissar of Education and one of the most cultured men in the Soviet Union, who could repeat the whole of *Crocodile* from memory, is reported to have remarked: "One cannot always look at the sun and sometimes one has to have a rest from ideology also." Dr. Meksin, who has an unparalleled collection of children's books of all countries and periods, remarked: "The real trouble lies in Chukovsky's imitators; since they are not all as gifted as he, their work has neither the merit of being good verse nor that of being good ideology. And Chukovsky is not imitating himself well in his later work." This fight had the effect of making the book one of the most sought after in Russia, and to-day no copy can be found. Gosizdat no longer prints it.

Children's magazines and newspapers add their contribution to the building of the new conceptions. *Iskorka* (*Little Spark*) and *Zorka* (*Little Dawn*) are the two main weeklies, but there are plenty of others. Every nationality has children's newspapers in its own language.

Magazines carry facsimiles of wall newspapers done by small children; verses, stories, moral tales, and accounts of the children's doings. The achievements are of the same kind as those extolled by adult papers and magazines, shock-brigade work, work among Oktobriionoks and Pioneers,

anti-religious work, self-criticism, mutual aid. What the child's attitude should be to the new man and the new institutions is brought out in picture, story, and poem. The Red Army man, for example, is not a soldier in the old militarist sense. He is a friendly, amiable equal comrade, who will defend his country as a responsible, proud Soviet citizen, not as the subordinate tool of militarists and generals.

One issue of *Iskorka* carried a poem telling of a little boy who had insulted a Red Armyist by calling him a soldier. "No one shall dare call me a soldier!" said the Red Army man, and little Garik asks his mother, "Is soldier a bad word, Mamma?" Soldiers march in step," he is told.

Soldiers march in step,
March in step,
Soldiers do.
With the left foot,
With the left foot. . . .

And also they go out at the bidding of their generals, Pole and Negro, French and Germans, soldiers do, and shoot at the workers. But Red Armyists with their Comrade Commander, ready for defence, will always help the workers. Little Garik is shocked.

You mean that soldiers
Shoot at workers? . . .
Mamma, soldiers are not brave people.

And he hopes the man will come back, so that he can tell him that he didn't mean to call a Red Armyist a soldier. The poem ends:

Soon soldiers in most distant lands
Will become Red Armyists.

One of the most exciting things happening in the field of writing for children is the new School of Children's Literature in Leningrad. This group consists of about twenty young men and women, all specialists in some field, who come together to discuss the methods of writing about their

specialty for children. Not only for children, however. They want to describe their experiences and their knowledge so that grown-ups also will enjoy them.

The school is headed by S. Marshak, a popular writer of children's verse in Russia and brother to the Ilin who wrote *New Russia's Primer*. Marshak is a middle-aged, kindly faced man, who lived some years in England before the World War and translated Blake, Coleridge, and Wordsworth into Russian. He is the only member of the Leningrad school whose specialty is writing; he was a poet before he took to writing children's books. Ilin is a chemical engineer who lectures at the Technological Institute in Leningrad and has built a chemical factory; Potilov a fireman; Bianki a naturalist who writes animal stories, a sort of Ernest Thompson Seton. His father was a professor of ornithology. Jitkov is a sailor and writes books popularising technique. Tichailov, an architect, writes on the new Soviet towns; Olenikov, political and revolutionary books; Grigoriev, books about the civil war and other historical events. There is a book on weights and measures by Merkulova, a mathematician. She calls it *The Factory of Exactness* and it is as exciting as the *Primer*.

There are also in the school a diver, a surveyor, a textile worker, and two former besprizornie; Kajenikov, who writes so bitterly that some feel the books are hardly for children; and Panteliev, not yet twenty years old, who wrote at seventeen *Schkid*, the story of a homeless waif, which has been translated into German and has sold in large numbers both in Germany and in Russia. Levin, a young Jew who lived as a child in Southern Russia, has written in *Diecet Wagonow* (*Ten Cars*) ghastly stories of the treatment of Jewish children during the civil war, stories he lived through himself.

The school does not content itself with sitting in its editorial offices. It takes its office to the factory, reads to the workers the newest stories, invites criticism and comment, discusses the technique of writing children's books. The plumber, the metal worker, the carpenter, the lathe-operator, is to write his experiences for children also; both that children may know about them and that workers may learn to

write. Members of the school train, coach, and criticise the worker-writers. "The art of the editor is something quite different in a collective society," says Marshak. "He is no longer a man with a blue pencil; he is a man who helps you find yourself."

Of course writers are not always successful in their attempts to write dynamically of the new life, any more than illustrators always get the effects they want. But they are making the attack in Bolshevik tempo and mass formation. Shock-brigades have been formed to write books for children.

Such ideals did not attract writers and artists before the Revolution. They wanted merely to amuse the children; they thought children must not be bothered with grown-up concerns, they must live in a world of their own. We hear such comments often enough. Yet in Russia to-day Soviet children are more interested in great engineering projects like Dnieprostroy or the Volga Canal than in some Persian legend. "We want all writers of children's books to have had full experience of the subjects they write about," said Marshak. "Even textbooks must become dramatic. We cannot come to our children with empty hands; we must not deceive them with false conversations. Science is a field of battle and every one who comes to our field must have been a fighter. A child, you know, should come to life as to the third act of a play, knowing what came before, understanding what it sees, and with a heightened sense of the beauty and drama it may get out of life—by participating. Our children must carry the history and the problems of this period in their bones; they must never consider themselves mere audience. Every child is a little builder of socialism."

Soviet mothers are taught how to choose their children's books. The *Catalogue of Children's Books* discusses three mistakes of mothers:

Mothers must not think their children should be given only very simple books, they must not buy just any book to keep the child quiet so that it won't ask questions, and they must not choose those books for their children that were chosen for them in their own youth. This is particularly undesirable now because pre-Revolutionary books were either sentimental or frightening. The child is

really scared by bogeys created in books—even so charming a bogey as Chukovsky's brigand Barmalee, who ate the doctor who came to save the little boy and girl who had run away to Africa.

The same catalogue lists five requirements for children's books:

Books should make the child know and understand the world around it, what causes day and night, why a room, a street, a chair, the seasons, cities and villages. A child should not be told in answer to every question: "God made the seasons, God made flowers and fruit and animals, God made men." The child should be taught all that science can teach.

Books should seek to make of the child a socialist child—should help him work with his class, with the collective; to become an internationalist, a world revolutionary.

Books should influence the child to become strong, alert, truthful, purposeful, busy, usefully occupied, and unafraid of life. The child should be constructive, help in community work wherever he can, by liquidating illiteracy, cleaning up rubbish, joining the Pioneers.

Books should make the child glad.

Books should be well written, vigorous, and of a high artistic standard.

The Soviet books for children are certainly having their planned effect. The modern child prefers books about actual happenings, as the American small boy prefers the story of Charles Lindbergh flying the Atlantic to the story of Snow White. "Why do people write those funny stories?" asked a small girl who had just heard about the absent-minded gentleman who forgot which way his clothes went on. Another, reading a fairy story, remarked, "It's lying." Her mother explained the difference between fairy stories and lying, but the child persisted. "If the story's not true, it's a lie."

Children's writers who still write "meaningless" tales are considered counter-Revolutionary and looked on with disfavour. The children themselves are not interested. "Bring me home something on Dnieprostroy, or the Turksib, peat or oil," the child will ask. "I want to know what is going on." My little girl friend of seven is honestly bored by fairy tales. "But what does he write those things for?" she asks. And

fairy tales are not to be bought in the shops.⁶ At least not the fairy tales of the good old days. Comrade Coal, Piatiletka, and the adventures of aeroplane, Zeppelin, crane, and tractor have replaced the knight, the princess on the pea, and the broad bean that burst. The Revolutionary children of to-day, though joyous and laughing, are made fully aware of the tasks that await them and the rôle they are going to play in building their country.

⁶ Now it is reported (*Herald Tribune*, December 24th, 1932) that fairy tales are to be introduced again, but without witches, angels, mermaids or mysticism. N. C. Krupskaya, who is Assistant Commissar of Public Instruction, has recommended that "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and other such tales be given Soviet children. Chukovsky wants *Alice in Wonderland*. A prominent communist urged in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* that the best children's classics be reprinted, but Mme. Krupskaya also advises Soviet writers of children's books to "study carefully the form of the old fairy tale so as to put new Communist subjects into the old and well-tried framework."

CHAPTER XVI

SOCIALIST HOUSES AND SOVIET TOWNS

Communism does not mean the abolition of individuality. Individualism we want to liquidate, not individuality.—N. OSSINSKY

HOUSING and town-planning—to many a dull phrase. But what new problems and discussions, heated controversies and excited argument, it leads to in the Soviet Union! For houses and towns will help lay the socialist basis of living, and cities laid out wrong mean retardation of the development of a society. Faulty conceptions of communism may mean the rebuilding of entire cities.

Thus architects and city-planners have a heavy responsibility in the Soviet Union. In part they have to be working in the dark. It is not known yet what the final communist society will be like, but these communities have to be laid down now in bricks and mortar. Architects have a freedom of opportunity rarely before possessed, which makes city planning in the USSR an exciting subject. "Never in the history of the world has there been such a chance to replan an old city as there is in the case of Moscow, to make it fit not only for the life of to-day but for the life of the future," said John Nolen, president of the International Housing and Town Planning Federation.

The freedom is increased because the Soviet architect and city-planner has to worry about few of the considerations that slow up city-builders of other countries. "The rest of the world has creative ideas too," said the same critic, addressing Moscow planners, "but you can put into effect the

things we plan but which get blocked by our real estate interests, commercial interests, and all the many hindrances which we have to a central planning system." No consideration of rent or landlords, few worries about tearing down private houses and streets, deter the planner of the new Soviet cities. The Russian architect is hampered by shortage and poor quality of materials and skilled labour, frequent changes of plans and ideas; in other respects he starts from scratch. He has the job of building cities for half a million people from the ground up, on barren steppe and Siberian plain, where no tree or log hut stands. The new cities are to appear like Jason's soldiers, fully armed, without first long years of growth and development.

New plans are considered on a vast scale. One day it is the union of the Moscow and the Volga rivers; the next a canal from the Volga to the Dnieper—an old Russian ideal of Czars and engineers. Again a city of a million is to grow near a manganese mountain or a park for fifty thousand people is to be laid out.

And always what the new society will be like has to be the foremost consideration. Present home life may not exist under developed communism; people's leisure occupations may be different. Will large towns exist under socialism? What part is the private automobile likely to play? Will the individual family still be the unit?

Considerations of mass psychology have to enter the city-planner's calculations. How large a part of the group can the individual recognize? "We used to know the men in our company but not the men in the battalion," said Hannes Mayer, the well-known German architect who left the Bauhaus at Dessau to plan schools in the Soviet Union. He was discussing planning problems at a meeting, to which I had been invited, of the government institution for the planning of new industrial cities. He went on debating other problems.

One of the most serious problems in other countries is how to harmonise old and new architecture. This question doesn't arise, at least not in this form, here. Why should this country try to harmonise its new with its old architecture, any more than we should

try to harmonise with old monasteries, castles, palaces? The architecture of capitalist countries is capitalist, and our architecture will be Soviet. But just as the old psychology will vanish, so the old architecture will vanish.

But we don't know yet how far psychology will change. Mass psychology is in flux to-day. We have to estimate how far material environment is influenced by fundamentals of human nature, and how far these are due to what tradition and environment have done. Is there any transition type of architecture that will harmonise with the future type, so that we won't have to build all our cities and houses over again? How far can the tastes and desires of people be controlled—and how far is it desirable that they should be?

Ernest May, another prominent German architect in charge of several hundred of the new industrial cities, explained how his plans had to be changed with each new change in party policy:

Greater importance is attached to demonstrations now than formerly, so every kvartal [section of a certain size, seemingly becoming the unit of socialist cities] of the towns I am building has to have its demonstration centre. There was a sudden desire for gardens and parks, so we have had to include far more of these than formerly. We find that on their day of rest the workers like to wander in the parks. With the development and growth of physical culture we find we need more gymnasia, sports stadia and open spaces. In Kusnetz we have carried out the desire for a green city by a two hundred foot wide green (tree-lined) avenue, leading all the way from the factory to the park.

In Dneprostroy every street and avenue is already tree-lined. In Stalingrad planes and birches are growing fast. In all the towns I visited I saw public gardens being laid out, some with spraying fountains and statues. Marigolds and begonias were vying with blast furnaces in their Bolshevik tempo of growth. May said:

The big difference between the new socialist construction and the old town-planning lies in the fact that now towns can be systematically planned from the beginning. Care and welfare can be organised systematically. If we know what we want, we can build it and put it where we want it. Nothing has to depend on unforeseeable private whims. Annoying mistakes have occurred of course,

due to the tremendous rush and strain under which we work. Many people want to know for what obscure reason the town of Magnitogorsk had been built on hills. The reason was simple. When the plans were drawn for the factory, the planners forgot to leave room for the houses and when we came to build them, we found no other place for them but on the hillsides. But if we are careful enough we should have few regrets about how our cities are laid out.

The main bases of city-planning are laid down in decisions of Party Congresses. The Party Plenum of June, 1931, adopted these housing resolutions :

Housing is used in capitalist lands as a means of exploiting the workers through rents, etc. Pre-war Russian cities were far behind even the capitalist countries of Europe ; then they were destroyed by war ; there were no repairs at all after 1913. Yaroslav, Kiev, Odessa, Dniepropetrovsk, Rostov, the towns of the Volga, the Urals, and Siberia, were largely ruined.

The Plenum considered in detail plans for municipal expansion made by the Moscow Party Committee and the Moscow City Soviet, and gave specific directions.

Moscow city-planning organisations together with the Gosplan [State Planning Commission] and the Commissariat of Finance are to work out a three-year plan of house-building in Moscow for not less than half a million people. The Supreme Economic Council is to supply sufficient building materials for the 80 million rouble programme of house-building in Moscow for 1931. In this building we must consider the new standards of living. We must have fifteen new communal laundries in connection with large apartment houses, two mechanised laundries for hospitals, and kindergartens and nurseries sufficient for all workers' children ; all to be built within two years.

The Moscow co-operatives are to increase the number of stores and warehouses on the outskirts of the city in the workers' sections. The five bread factories in Moscow are insufficient. By the end of 1932 bread-making should be entirely mechanised in Moscow. There are to be also more restaurants, tea rooms, and communal dining-rooms.

Such are the Party orders to be carried out in the next batch of blue prints,

A long article in several issues of *Izvestia* by N. Ossinsky, a prominent Soviet economist and publicist, illustrates the kind of discussions that take place in the Soviet Union about housing and town-planning. This article gives also the most authoritative recent Communist ideas "Concerning Cities under Socialism."

Will cities remain under socialism or will they die off after some thousands of years? What will be the structure and the social character of communities under socialism?

For Friedrich Engels [the German communist], "socialistic town" was a contradiction in terms, for socialism is to mean the elimination of all distinctions between town and village. . . . Yet Engels was only partly right.

The concentration of population in big industrial areas is a necessary economic development. In agriculture too the tendency is toward large agrarian-industrial combinations, rather than comparatively small agricultural communities. Developed socialism will mean the elimination of the old division of labour, the breakdown of divisions of people into set professional groups, the possibility of periodic changes of occupation to achieve an all-round developed personality. Each person will participate in both industrial and agricultural production.

In an industrial combine like Magnitogorsk, for example, and the group of collective and state farms connected with it, workers will work at one time in the agricultural centre and at another in the industrial. So either there will have to be periodic migrations, or else people will have to make long journeys from their homes, because these should be located far from industrial centres.

At first some theorists thought workers should live at the same place as they worked "so that the proletarian would become spiritually in tune with the machine." There was one curious plan for a tractor factory in which the assembly conveyor ran through a row of apartments. But such ideas were discarded with amusement or ridicule. Now the workers are to live away from their work, the residential areas are to be quiet and peaceful with parks and trees and playgrounds predominant, and a green zone as buffer between them and the industrial centres.

Some of the new cities are being strung out in chains, and

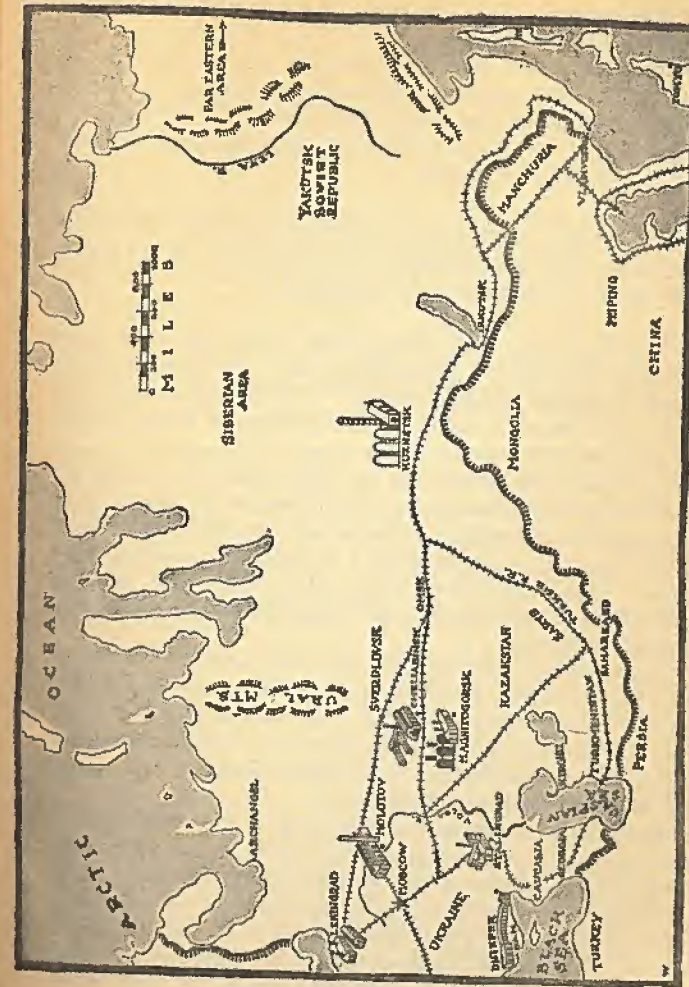
really consist of several towns loosely connected, possibly each some miles from the next. An industrial plant may be the focus of each, as in the case of Stalingrad, which is to be a "combination city" of five strung along the Volga, each two miles away from the next.

Ossinsky discusses what will become of the large cities of to-day :

How will things be twenty-five years hence? Let us say in 1956. Will Moscow cease to be a big city? We can't imagine it turning into a waste or a green field. But that decentralisation will continue, that there will be parks and open squares, we can be sure of. Moscow to-day is too scattered; it is undeveloped from the capitalistic viewpoint and it could be more concentrated even from the socialistic point of view. The process of decentralisation will require less time and labour with us than it would in London, New York, or Chicago. The development of the suburbs will help decentralise Moscow.

Reorganised into a constellation of socialist cities, Moscow will very likely assume for a long time to come the rôle of the spiritual centre of European Russia. It is absurd to suppose that under developed socialism people will not gather in such centres. No matter how far the means of communication will be developed, nothing can replace live and direct social contact. It is as necessary as contact with nature; and to believe that people will cease collecting in big masses, at any rate at intervals, would be to disregard one of the strongest urges of social man.

Apart from city factories—agrarian-industrial centres—to which people will come periodically from their work, apart from smaller residential towns in which they will live, engage in mental activities, and rest, it is possible under socialism to have cities that shall be centres of mental and cultural communication only. Periodically, large masses of people will come to such cities, looking for such intercourse. If, as in the United States, hundreds of thousands of people come by automobile from all ends of the country to watch football matches or bouts between world champion boxers, why shouldn't the members of socialistic society do the same and even on a greater scale? But they will come together for more serious purposes also than merely to gaze at the scrimmage called football or the other scrimmage called boxing. People will so gather together because only thus can everybody participate in the highest achievements of culture. Big capitalistic cities will disappear, partly as a result of



THE SOVIET UNION
Showing some of the main new industrial towns and Soviet republics

decentralisation and partly because they will evolve into a new type of community, into a temporary reservoir of social contacts. They will vanish maybe at the end of the twentieth century with the transition to communism.

In the present period of catching up with and surpassing highly developed industrial countries, cities will be what they are now—the reservoirs of proletarian power; they will be the leading battle centres and the focus of the proletarian movement that will soon assume world-wide proportions.

Then Ossinsky takes up the question of home life under communism. Will communism mean barrack life, as many people assert? His answer is emphatic:

We frequently meet with strange ideas about home life under socialism, such as these: "All individual home life (not only family life) will disappear under socialism." "There will be no more separate apartments; it will not be necessary to have separate rooms nor places where one can be alone." "The whole life of a person, physical and mental, can be lived within the collective." "It isn't necessary to have personal individual belongings, not only no 'my room' but even no 'my table' or 'my bed,' not to speak of no 'my bicycle' or automobile." It isn't clear whether there may be a "my" toothbrush, soap, towel, underwear, frock, or whether all these must lose their individualities and be turned into impersonal belongings. . . .

Is such an attitude correct? No, not at all. It's a very bad and harmful misconception, an evil caricature of communism; the sort of harmful interpretation which, if taken seriously, will frighten people away from the fight for communism. To explain communism as a mechanical equalisation and depersonalisation is a petty-bourgeois or bourgeois interpretation.

Home life under developed socialism will not be barracks life. Material means to satisfy demands will exist, just as many-sided personalities and individualities will exist. Communist life is not to be a modern barracks with common bedrooms and even beds. Communist life will be organised so that man can at any time be alone, to rest, to think, to concentrate. Communism does not mean the abolition of individuality. Individualism we want to liquidate, not individuality.¹

¹ *Izvestia*, June 7-8, 1931.

Since people in the Soviet Union are in different stages on the road to socialism, several systems of housing are in vogue. There are individual apartments as in other countries, in which the family lives, cooks, washes, from which the children go to school every day, and where a servant or nurse (if one can be afforded) looks after the younger children. There are communal houses in different stages of communisation—a group of people may live in their own apartment but share a common kitchen; they may share a common kitchen and dining-room; or they may have just a gas ring on which they can cook breakfast and supper, but no facilities for cooking the main meal. The main meal may be taken at the factory where the father works, or in a common dining-room attached to the Community House. The third type is the Dom Communa (Community House), a big block of buildings in which people have their own rooms to sleep in, but every other household activity—laundry work, cooking, reading, recreation, amusement, schooling, is undertaken communally. As yet there are few of these but their number is increasing.² In the new industrial towns such as Nijni Novgorod (now Gorki), Stalingrad, Magnitogorsk, Kuznetsk (now Stalinsk), a third of the apartment buildings are to be community houses. At a recent Party Plenum it was ordered that no new houses at all be built without communal kitchens, nurseries, dining-rooms, and laundries.

Opinion has gone through different stages as to the desirability of communal living. In the beginning an attempt was made to compel everybody to live in the communal house. Then it was found that many people objected, that they were not ready for it; families still clung to the old "domestic hearth." It was decided that communal living should be allowed to be a slow development. Now a plebiscite is usually taken before a new town is begun, to find out what types of buildings the future inhabitants want. In the Don Basin most of the miners voted for individual houses. The miner is more of an individualist than other workers, it is said. In one town about 60 per cent of the dwellings were planned

² M. Ilin describes the communal house on Khavsky Street, Moscow, in *New Russia's Primer*.

as community houses, but the plebiscite showed that only 5 per cent of the population wanted them, so they were not built.

Provisions are also made for development. "If communist life proceeds," one architect said, "we can take away the individual kitchen and build a communal dining-room. Then each family will have an extra room." And meanwhile, since house-building has to go on for this generation in which the family still is the unit, it is suggested by some that individual kitchenettes be built which can be turned into closets for another generation.

House-building will be different again when every family has an icebox, every building a lift and a garage, and the workers demand window boxes, private baths, radios, and electric kitchen appliances. Since the country is being rapidly electrified, once the appliances can be manufactured every workers' apartment will be able to have them. But at present they don't exist and so plans have to go forward without them.

The phrase "parks and open spaces" takes on fresh meanings in Russia. The first talk I had about parks was with an aggressive little Brooklyn architect who had gone to the Soviet Union and who was already in charge of all the parks of Moscow. "I want to have lots of lawns," he said, "and on each of them a notice: *Walk on the Grass*." He had quickly caught the Soviet desire not only to break completely with all tradition, but to do the opposite of what had been done before to mark that break. In building the children's towns that are such a feature of Russian parks he wanted to have the little trains and trucks and donkey carts run across sand that was not only ordinary sand, but formed into geographical maps of Russia. The small child would be learning where were the hills and valleys, the rivers and canals, the coal mines and oil fields, of his country, while amusing himself running his train across sand dunes.

Professor Alexander Zelenko, who studied pedagogy and city-planning in the United States, has been given the task of arranging one of the largest parks ever laid out, on the outskirts of Moscow—the Sakolniki Park, covering eight

thousand acres. "I have to know what men are going to do with their leisure," he said. "Our problem is how to get our socialist ideas into our social institutions. We want to embody educational features, teach the workers what is correct diet, have them learn about other countries, enjoy sports and music, while they are in the park. Samoyeds and reindeer will be brought here for rides in winter, and we have already a station for ten thousand skis. Four million people a year visit this park already."

As they are about everything else, children are consulted about city-planning too. Professor Zelenko asked many children what their ideas of the new socialist towns were, and he found their replies so interesting that he has published them in a little book. "What will our new life be like, and what sort of towns must we build for it?" he asked them. These are some of their replies:

We shall live in communal houses, we shall dine in the communal dining-room, each of us will have his own plate and towel. We shall replace horses by steel horses, the scythes by mowing machines, rakes by machine rakes, our oil lamps by the little Ilyich lamp. [Electric light bulbs are named after Lenin—Vladimir Ilyich.] The land will belong to everybody.

Our hens will be full-blood, and we shall produce them in incubators. Domestic animals will be of good breed and will be milked by electricity. Our fields will be harvested ten times over. There will be regular rotation of crops and for sowing we shall take only the best seed. Agricultural economy will be under the direction of agronomists. We shall have our own agronomists, mechanics, and tractor-drivers.

There will be no money because we shall exchange products. . . . Where the crop can be good there we shall sow grain, and in good potato soil only potatoes. Thus we can use grain and vegetables for exchange and money will be unnecessary.

We shall build ever so many factories, plants, and cultural institutions. In the churches we shall open clubs, museums, and reading izbas. Our roads will be good, and we shall drive in automobiles. We shall all have radios, be members of co-operatives, and be literate. We shall grow forests of pines and firs in order to be healthy.³

³ A. Zelenko, *The March of Cities*, 1930. Not as yet translated into English.

"I wish you would write and tell me what people are doing in park-work in the U.S.A.," Professor Zelenko said wistfully when wishing me good-bye. "We do want to get all the ideas we can from other countries, embodying the best there is for our working people."

CHAPTER XVII

ART LEAVES THE IVORY TOWER

Our workers and peasants have the right to true, great art.

—VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN

THE CONCEPTION of the place and function of art and the artist has changed radically in the Soviet Union. Like everything else in the new society, art has to be built on a new basis. "We must keep the workers and peasants always before our eyes," said Lenin. "We must learn to manage and reckon for them, even in the sphere of art and culture."

People to-day are hardly aware of how much of what they think is universal art is really the art of a class, say Marxians. Artists are not universal, catholic, classless; if they are not doing propaganda for capitalism, they are giving the bourgeoisie the art it likes and can understand, and which allows it to go complacently the way it is going.

In most of the world art is and for centuries has been for the few. Artists themselves speak of their work (usually proudly) as "caviar for the general." Few "intellectual" books are read by or could be understood by working-class people. Bertrand Russell, the Huxleys, John Dewey, George Santayana, Theodore Dreiser, Willa Cather, T. S. Eliot, Robinson Jeffers, to speak only of a few living writers, are not read by the masses. The masses rarely visit the opera, the ballet, art shows, painting exhibits, even museums. If economic considerations were removed, would they go? The majority would probably still consider themselves unable to appreciate these art expressions.

We make a distinction between "art" and "popular art."

To produce popular art is looked on as a selling-out, a prostitution; "popular artist" is a term of opprobrium, "popular taste" is almost synonymous with lack of taste. The "highbrow" artist will tell you that the masses cannot appreciate great art, that "it will always be above their heads." Movie magnates say they have to produce what they and others consider inferior films because they must "give the public what it wants." There is a chasm in the Western world between what we call the educated and the cultured, and the uneducated and little-cultured; and the division is almost entirely along the lines of class. Wealth means the chance for education, poverty the lack of it. Art has reconciled itself to a numerically small audience. Many writers form small cliques and write only for one another. The circle of those who appreciate the older arts becomes ever smaller.

The Soviet Union has for this attitude only contempt. In a tiny outlying village I came across a slogan strung across the sky: *To Live Without Work is Robbery: To Work Without Art Is Barbarism*. Lenin said:

It is not important what art gives to a few hundreds or even thousands of a population as great as ours. Art belongs to the people. It must have its deepest roots in the broad mass of the workers. It must be understood and loved by them. It must be rooted in and grow with their feelings, thoughts, and desires. It must arouse and develop the artist in them. Are we to give cake and sugar to a minority when the mass of workers and peasants still lack black bread? And the workers have the right to true great art. They made the Revolution. They are not supported by the state; they support the state by their work.¹

Mankind has developed to a point where, in modern times, art has got to be for everybody or it fails to be art, say communists. They point to the lack of purpose and lack of content in art to-day, to its failure in even its "universal themes" to point to what is actuating human beings and shaping their lives, to the lack of an audience and the shackles that bind the artist. The artist is working for a

¹ Clara Zetkin, *op. cit.* [Translation by the author from the original German.]

market whether he is aware of it or not; his work is influenced by economic considerations. In a society based on private property the artist produces goods for the market, for he needs buyers, says Lenin. In the Communist state this is not so:

Our revolution has lifted the pressure of this most prosaic state of affairs from the artists. It has made the Soviet State their protector and patron. Every artist, everybody who wishes to, can claim the right to create freely according to his ideal, whether it turn out to be good or not.²

In the Soviet Union artists have to do a certain amount of work for the state—paint a certain number of pictures a year, make a stipulated number of busts, illustrate children's books, or design toys, posters, and so forth. In return for this they are paid a living wage; and the original of their work belongs to them. Writers are sent on missions to farms or factories, to steep themselves in their atmosphere, and are then asked to write about them, much as writers are assigned articles by American magazines. One difference in the two systems is that the American writer or artist may or may not earn a livelihood from his work on commission, while the Soviet writer or artist does.

The idea that artists are forced to do what the state wants is as untrue as the legend that women are nationalised. When their orders are executed, Soviet artists are free to produce what they wish. They are limited only by the basic limitations that exist for art anywhere—social demands. The Victorian novel is not popular to-day. Since the Soviet artist's work is bought by factories, clubs, schools, rather than by private individuals, it will be affected by the tastes and demands of these institutions, if he wishes to sell it. In other words, he will adapt himself to his market, as artists do elsewhere.

A growing number of artists and writers are learning to appreciate the artistic possibilities in the scenes their assignments send them to. Sergei Tretyakov (author of the play

² *Ibid.*

Roar China produced in New York), Leonid Leonov, Marietta Shaginian, Boris Pasternak the lyric poet, who has won an international reputation, have all written movingly or humorously of the problems, situations, and relationships of the new life.

Vladimir Lidin, a leading Soviet novelist and member of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, tells how Soviet writers feel about their new assignments, and the general opportunities granted them since the Revolution. He says :

Consider our magnificent construction, which is attracting the world's attention. A Soviet writer cannot inspect that construction like a tourist armed with camera and cane. In Western countries some people seem to believe that our writers' brigades are something like military battalions, our work a form of compulsory "mobilisation." This is pure nonsense. Writers are not mobilised. They are given excellent sleeping-cars on the trains and are furnished with the best living-conditions. . . . Nowhere in the world is the writer given such ample opportunities for travel and study, going to any part of the country by ship, train, or aeroplane. During my extensive trips through Europe I have never heard of any government outside our own which builds houses, clubs, and restaurants for writers.

He goes on :

The civil war, the village, the factory, the years of starvation and wandering, these are the events which have fired the imagination of most of our modern writers. They can study life at close range and not through books ; they face life itself. Our epoch has provided writers with amazing experience. In that sense we are the most fortunate of generations. . . . We have witnessed the ruin of an empire about which writers in the past could only have dreamed. . . . Our epoch says to the writer : " You have been granted the gift of depicting life. Listen to life with rapture."³

Art in the Soviet Union has several tasks. It must reflect the new life, express the new people. It must seek to create an audience out of the masses, an audience that will be able

³ Vladimir Lidin, "Soviet Literature," translated into English in *New Masses*, November, 1932.

to appreciate art consciously. It must seek to "activise" the masses. Art for art's sake is ruled out. Art, like science, must consciously serve a social purpose.

The artist also has several jobs. He is to prosecute his art, but also to help discover and encourage talent, to help the masses express their art instincts.

A recent manifesto by well-known writers of the Soviet Union stated :

The artist must be a citizen, must consciously strive for the ideals the whole state is struggling to achieve. Literature and art are a mighty weapon which sways the consciousness of millions of people. This weapon should be wielded more deliberately than hitherto, to smite our enemies, to struggle for peace.

A movie actress put it another way. "Art must not only be good," she said one evening over the tea and herrings, "it must be good for something. It must help create the new psychology, as well as reflect what has been created. In your countries the arts have become limited, sterile : they do not touch people's real problems. We want our art to fill a need in the life of the masses. Whenever I am given a new rôle, I feel a sense of social responsibility. I ask myself, 'Can I act this so that I really satisfy my audience, really tell them something?' Recently they asked me to impersonate a militia-woman, but I had to refuse. I don't know enough about their lives to give a good portrait."

One Soyuzkino actress, Olga Andreevna Jizneva, is already the new artist. Serious, sincere, and outspoken, she does not play for popularity. There are no movie-fan magazines in the Soviet Union and the popularity of an actress is not measured by the number of letters her studio receives. Her name is not kept before the public by curious exploits or news of her private life. Jizneva does much social work ; she is a member of the presidium of her trade union and leads the purges of Party workers in the film industry. She does not care about career or advancement, but she does care intensely about the good the movies can do. Her pay is 300 or 400 roubles a month. She is married to a famous cinema director ; the two occupy two rooms scantily furnished and

eat from a plain wooden table set on a rugless floor. At parties Jizneva can be one of the most entertaining as she is one of the most interesting persons present.

I called on Lydia Seyfullina, the well-known Tartar woman writer. She had just moved to Moscow from Lenin-grad, and was barely installed in her three-room apartment. She came to the door in a Japanese dressing-gown, which with her round eyes and short hair cut in a bang made her stocky figure look like a Japanese doll. In the cold bare room we talked.

"It is difficult for me to settle to any work yet with this uncertainty about rooms," she said. "The Housing Commission promised us an apartment four months ago but we still have only a makeshift. So I'm not working on any story at present. But I go on with my social work. It takes time, but I learn about the new life and the problems of the men and women of to-day in my visits to the factory as I never would if I just sat at home. I help them get out their wall newspaper and their daily sheet, and encourage new writers by criticism of their work."

"Do you find talented writers?" I asked.

"Few as yet—they are but learning, and many do not realise how hard it is to write. They are not critical enough of their work. But they have energy and determination, and are learning to separate the valid from the insignificant in their daily lives."

"I went out to a Pioneer camp recently and stayed with the children for a week. That was a wonderful experience. We sat round the campfire at night and I told stories, some about the besprizornie I have written about. They love these stories."

I asked about having some of her books translated into English. She asked me for what publisher, and when I suggested one, she asked: "Is he friendly to us?"

Another Russian writer, Boris Pilnyak, lives in comparative comfort in a frame house of his own on the outskirts of Moscow. (Although all land belongs to the state, one may own one's own house but only for ninety-nine years.) It has five or six rooms, well furnished, and the author has

collected a large number of antiques and knickknacks. His wife is a young actress; her mother and two old aunts live with them. The wife and a little peasant worker run the household. This novelist is reputed to be one of the richest men in the Union; his income is estimated at 30,000 roubles a year. He goes abroad frequently and has travelled in and written about the Orient, the United States, and Europe. His books sell in great quantities. Pilnyak is a fellow traveller, no Communist, but he betrays at times a yearning to be ideologically more in the swim than he is.

Writers were always thought of highly in Russia and this attitude the Revolution has not altered. They are paid good royalties for their books and since some sell in editions of millions, authors are frequently comparatively well-to-do.

The Revolution has liberated new artistic forces. In what direction they are going or should go is not known and cannot be definitely planned, though some dogmatists lay down the law on this as uncompromisingly as they do on other matters. But there is a passionate desire for new forms, new content, and new roads for the cultural life. Lenin said:

The awakening, the activity of forces that will create a new art and culture in Soviet Russia, is good, very good. The stormy rate of this development is understandable and useful. We must and shall make up for what has been neglected for centuries. The chaotic ferment, the feverish search for new solutions and new watchwords, the "Hosanna" for certain artistic and spiritual tendencies to-day, the "Crucify them" to-morrow—all that is unavoidable.⁴

Revolutionary leaders have had to warn in art against the license and lack of form and restraint that appeared in personal and sex lives when the Revolution first swept old bonds away. And against the opposite danger also, greater in art than in other fields—that of slipping back into the old well-marked, well-worn paths.

There is great controversy between those who stand for some respect for what has been done in art, who believe art is a continuous stream, even if there is a Revolution in the

⁴ Clara Zetkin, *op. cit.*

middle, and those who want to pour out the baby with the bath and start fresh from the beginning. Lenin was not among those who wanted to throw away everything that had been done in the past merely because it was old. He said :

We are communists. We must not put our hands in our pockets and let chaos ferment as it pleases. We must consciously try to guide this development. We are much too much iconoclasts. We must retain the beautiful, take it as an example, hold on to it, even though it is old. Why turn away from real beauty, discard it for good and all as a starting-point for further development, just because it is old ? Why worship the new as the god to be obeyed, just because it is the new ? That is nonsense, sheer nonsense. There's a great deal of conventional art hypocrisy in it, too, and respect for the art fashions of the West.⁵

The danger of following the old traditional forms of art is the greater because the writers of old Russia were a class apart, belonging to the intelligentsia, the nobility, petty officialdom. To adapt themselves to the new era was for many of them painful, almost or quite impossible. To write of life and the times the older writer must know the life of a class he did not belong to, had never mixed with, felt socially alien to. The themes, the style, the heroes, of revolutionary literature are new to-day, as different as the taste, the vocabulary, and the philosophy of the new audience. The old tradition of the writer held that he must be impartial, divorced from life, that he must sit in an ivory tower and express his own individuality. This belief is ridiculed by the Revolution.

The history of art controversies since 1917 has followed the trend of economic and political events. From 1921 to 1928, the NEP period, the general policy in art was that of free competition between all literary and artistic groups not opposed to Soviet society ; but special encouragement was given to proletarian writers. Associations of specifically proletarian musicians, writers and artists were organised. The first years of the Five Year Plan, when NEP and its easier life were abandoned, certain intellectuals, including

⁵ Clara Zetkin, *op. cit.*

artists, became disaffected. Several of them, as illustrated in the Ramzin trial, even conspired to overthrow the régime. Then the unexpected success of the Five Year Plan won over many intellectuals, and, as has been pointed out before, these now support the régime with considerable enthusiasm. As a result all restrictions against intellectuals of bourgeois origin were abolished by Stalin in the speech of June 23, 1931. In the field of art this conciliation has been expressed by a return to the policy of encouraging different groups and schools, not only proletarian writers and Communists but also fellow travellers. On April 23, 1932, the Central Committee of the Party abolished by edict all specifically proletarian societies for education and culture. The edict points out that since writers as a group are now loyal to the régime and since the privileged position occupied for a brief period by the Association of Proletarian Writers led to excesses of a bureaucratic nature, it has no further reason to exist. To quote the edict :

Now that the ranks of proletarian writers and artists have filled out, when new writers and artists have come to the fore in factories, mills, and collective farms, the framework of the existing proletarian literary and art organisations is becoming too narrow, and artistic creation is interfered with. This situation brings with it the danger of transforming these organisations from instruments of mobilising Soviet writers and artists around the problems of socialist construction into closed circles detached from current political problems and from those groups of writers and artists sympathetic to the building of socialism. Therefore literary and art organisations must be reorganised on a wider base.

And so " Soviet " was substituted for " proletarian," and All-Russian Associations of Proletarian Writers, Musicians, Painters, etc., were liquidated and replaced by All-Russian Associations of Soviet Writers, Musicians, Painters, Sculptors.

An outline of what happened in the field of music in the last ten years will serve as an illustration. The Association of Proletarian Composers was formed in 1923 with the motto : " Music of the Revolution for the Revolution ; music

of the masses for the masses." In the first years of its existence the society was occupied chiefly with exposing the reactionary and the religious character of the older composers' music. Up to 1925 there was only one composer of revolutionary and working-class songs of any merit—Vassily-Buglai. In the NEP period fox trots and sentimental gypsy ballads came back to theatres and concert halls. But with the beginning of the Five Year Plan the proletarian composers, stirred to the same kind of militant activity as technicians and factory workers, composed songs and music that could serve for "propaganda" for industrialisation and collectivisation. The older musicians, isolated, were gradually eliminated from responsible positions.

At this time there was a turn from the mystical influence of Scriabin in music to simple and popular themes. New systems of teaching were established that tended toward the education of the masses rather than to the development of individual talent. During this period the masses were taught appreciation of music as they were taught to read and write: lectures were given in rest houses, public dining-rooms, clubs, libraries, over the radio. There was not enough proletarian music to fill the demand. And the older and conservative musicians now accused the young proletarians of opportunism, of writing unimportant trifles because they had not the talent to write better music. The young ones in return accused the older men of conservatism, sabotage, counter-Revolution.

Now, it is thought, with the abolition of purely proletarian art associations, many of these differences and conflicts will disappear. It is realised that art is on a different plane than politics. As one Communist critic said: "Art is very complicated. In politics there can be no vacillation; the Party line must be followed. Political mistakes may mean unnecessary sacrifices; they injure the working class; but mistakes in art do not cause such direct harm."

Because the influences of class differences are not yet removed there are different groups of artists and conflicts between those groups. Sergei Yessenin, the peasant poet who committed suicide, Boris Pilnyak, Feodor Gladkov,

Panteleimon Romanov, are all "Soviet" writers; but when one is asked (for instance), "Are the conditions painted in 'Three Pairs of Silk Stockings' true?" the Marxist answer would be, "Romanov is still under the influence of the petty-bourgeois class from which he sprang, and therefore he writes about the old intelligentsia in a different tone than would a communist or a writer of proletarian origin." Similarly Pilnyak is influenced by kulak psychology, Yessenin was influenced by the small peasant. And, say Marxists, to the extent that these poets and writers were or are influenced by the classes still remaining in Russia, they are not able to give true portrayals of communist psychology. But it is harder for the layman to detect their bias because they are artists. "All art is tendential, consciously or unconsciously," said a Communist art critic, "but the more unconscious its bias the more easily it is accepted by the reader."

It is with these Marxian reservations that one should read Trotsky's clear and vividly written treatise *Literature and Revolution*. Trotsky held a theory not accepted by the Party to-day—the theory of permanent Revolution—and all he says, even about art and literature, is coloured by this theory. His aesthetic theories are influenced by it as much as are his economic ideas. In this book Trotsky describes the different writers, poets, and artists, evaluating them from his revolutionary point of view; he also expounds communist policy toward art. But his ideas, the even generally accepted ideas current in 1925, are not always the ideas of 1932.

I called on Kerzhentsev at the Kremlin to ask his views about communist policy on art. He was once head of the Literary Section of the Communist Academy (a post later held by Lunacharsky); he edited a magazine and wrote a book on the revolutionary theatre, which has always very much interested him. He said:

"It's really quite simple. Other countries show things from a bourgeois point of view; we want to show them from a communist point of view. But we have got to develop our own art. And at present we have little time for that. This is not the historic moment to develop art: this is the time to produce coal and tractors and oil. We must build up our material

reserves. But in five or ten years, when we have done that, then we can turn more of our attention to art. We know something about economics. We've studied economic processes in detail for sixty, seventy years ; but in art we are still shy. Little really proletarian art has developed. We have paid little attention to it."

I talked with a representative of the Proletarian Musicians who was in the midst of stormy dissensions with the broadcasting authorities. He wanted more proletarian music on the radio, they more classical. "How can our new musicians ever gain confidence if they are not to be heard?" he fumed. "We send them to the factories to learn the new rhythms of trip hammer and blast furnace, and they compose their works, and then we play Chopin and Schubert and Bach."

It has happened that in some distant village Schubert or Chopin has been prohibited by some local hothead, but such impetuous action is rare and usually soon reversed. At concerts, in rest houses and sanatoria, and on the radio much classical music can be heard, and Russians are extremely fond of it. Jazz, however, is frowned on as "the music of decaying capitalism." The proletarian musician explained to me also why the Soviets did not approve of the fox trot.

"It is a dance that gives the capitalist rhythm of work," he said, "the rhythm of the machine."

"But you glorify the machine!"

"Our machines do not work for the capitalist. Your machine rhythms keep the worker in the same frame of mind he is in during the day ; they do not let him forget that he is working for some one else. So this dance is no real recreation. All day he works at the bench at exploited labour and in the evening he continues in the rhythm and the ideas of that work."

This is an example of some of the statements one hears in the Soviet Union that seem to the visitor exaggerated or ridiculous. Many Russians also condemn and ridicule them, but they are repeated, and exercise their influence. My musician went on :

"The fox trot is also a sexual dance but it has no real,

primitive, joyous sexuality. It's a degenerate and false sexuality."

"But it was taken from the Negroes, who are primitive and joyous."

"When the Negroes play or dance jazz, it's different. That is the vital expression of a real, and to them native, emotion. When the whites ape it they get the form but not the spirit, the leaden tune but not the dancing motive. It is only outward, not real and felt. The capitalist world uses the form and ignores the spirit." Other critics object to jazz because it is alien to the Russian people.

Whatever their reasons and rationalisations, it is folk dancing that is encouraged and carried on in park and club and holiday resort. The new Soviet ballet has caught the popular fancy and is replacing the old ballet, the "dance of Czar and nobility." The peasants and factory workers still delight in seeing the old ballets, however, for they have never seen before such "glory," even though it be only stage tinsel and organdie ballet frocks.

So far in the older arts, painting, sculpture, the ballet, opera, few outstanding works have appeared since the Revolution. Perhaps other arts will replace these. Edmund Wilson has remarked that the literary art of the Bolsheviks has been and may turn out to be the political pamphlet. Some of the writings of Lenin and Trotsky and possibly Lunacharsky, Michael Koltzov, and Karl Radek in this field reach heights comparable to the best political writing of the past. The movies, puppet shows, and children's books are reaching artistic heights now rarely touched in other countries. These may turn out to be particularly Soviet arts, forms best fitted for the content of the new art.

The peasants continue their woodcarving, toy-making, and handicraft work, for which they have always been noted. The Palech artists who used to make and paint icons now make polished lacquer boxes, transferring their skill to this medium. Their subject matter is changing from the old myths and religious subjects to presentations of modern scenes with tractors and collective haystacks. The Palech painters, like the other artists, are supported by the state

and are highly regarded. Each box or plaque bears the artist's name on the back. Architects and designers in the Soviet Union are considered as much artists as painters, sculptors, and writers, their work being always signed.

"The wall between art and industry is coming down," said Leon Trotsky in 1925.⁶ The Soviet Union is developing an art audience of many millions. Russians, a dramatic people, always have been great theatre and movie goers; since the price of these entertainments has now fallen within everybody's means, and because they feel art has something to give *them*, the masses have become enthusiastic art patrons. For days before theatrical and operatic performances and concerts all seats are sold out; frequently a whole theatre is bought up by a factory or a trade union. At open-air concerts, some of which are held in the grounds of movie houses, every seat is filled. The audience is educated even at these concerts; I saw a conductor in one cinema-park turn savagely on an audience in which two people were whispering, upbraid them before the whole assemblage, and refuse to conduct for ten minutes.

Guides take parties of peasants and workers, students and children, through the museums and picture galleries explaining the exhibits. Sometimes only subject matter is drawn attention to, especially of historical pictures, but I heard one guide explaining technically to a group of carpenters and joiners how the different colours of a painting were "joined" or fused to get the desired result.

That art knowledge is being gained by the masses the often vehement arguments and debates that can be heard in tramcar and on scaffolding, in a mine or on a Volga boat, bear witness. Russians talk about art as Americans discuss baseball.

General taste is still on a somewhat crude level. Lace curtains and aspidistras are thought pleasant decorations in the new apartments and dining-rooms, crockery and glassware are overdecorated, dishes turned out in the shape of a cabbage leaf or an onion. I have seen as much hilarity at the oldest and dullest American movies and at childish slapstick

⁶ Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, New York, 1925.

comedies as at the most artistic work of a great director. This may be due to the comparative newness of the movie and the talkie and to the still rather drab and not very joyful lives the majority of people lead, or to their childlike natures. The more childlike puppet shows and circuses entrance Russians, children and adults like.

Theatrical and movie audiences have increased by millions. From 1929 to 1931 the number of movie houses tripled. It is estimated that some eight million people visit the movie every year. Increasing millions listen in on the radio.

The theatre is a battle ground for controversy as much as the other arts. The masses read with avidity what the newspapers and theatrical magazines have to say, discuss, debate, argue, and flock to the theatres where dramatists and directors carry their theories into effect. The Revolutionary state is of course vitally interested in the stage as a means of education, of helping to build as well as portraying the new culture. Plays are rarely prohibited, the Government confining its activities more to persuasion of authors and directors. But there is public and widespread criticism of bad plays, in which newspapers, Young Communists, factories, and the audience participate. A film in Russia is tried out not in the provinces, but in a factory.

The Soviet Board of Theatre Censorship, composed of a garage hand and two other people, has little say and few people know of its existence. The Commissariat for Education and Party authorities take a hand in censorship, as well as the newspapers and other forums of public opinion. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* printed a scathing criticism of a new play, *The Line of Fire*, one of the early attempts of the stylised Kamerny Theatre to deal with the new life. It said:

In other days you would have found an old castle, a rich baron, and some poor wandering actress as the characters in a drama at this theatre. To-day these characters are changed to a besprizorni girl, a lunatic, and a chief of construction; and instead of ancestral walls in the background you have the scaffoldings of a new plant. But in essentials the play is unaltered. The new interests the author only as shadowy background; the drama is played out with the

old ingredients. The girl is converted by love—age-old, simple, eternal love.

Another article said :

One of the worst evils in art to-day is mere adaptiveness. They take any old theme and paint it red ; any old melody and give it new words. Revolutionary painters limn Kalinin the way they used to paint Tolstoy mowing hay at Yasnaya Polyana. Mostorg [one of the large co-operatives] took the statue of Amor and Psyche, put a Pioneer's necktie on the Amor, cut off his wings, and gave him a Pioneer's horn to replace the arrow. A red flag was placed in the hands of the naked woman and the whole thing turned out as a new statue ! And such things flood our workers' homes and our workers' lives ! We must sharpen the struggle on the art front.

The idea that art is shackled in the Soviet Union seems unsupported by fact. It may not attack communism, but with that restriction it may choose its own subjects and forms. Naturally, as elsewhere, public opinion demands certain subjects, which change as conditions change. For a time it was desirable that the machine be glorified, that themes be industrial and agricultural construction, heroes shock-brigaders or collectivised peasants. The struggle of the classes, the problems of socialist construction, Revolutionary history, passed the censor when movies and plays glorifying the individual, presenting sex problems and love triangles, did not. But there is considerably more latitude than is usually supposed. Operas such as *Eugene Onegin*, *La Bohème*, *Love and Cunning*, *Princess Turandot*, *The Queen of Spades*, *La Fille de Madame Angot* are always on the weekly programmes, and the works of Eugene O'Neill, Tolstoy, Bernard Shaw, and Shakespeare are included in most theatre schedules.

Recently human-interest dramas are again appearing in movie houses and on the boards. The president of the Union of Art Workers, Boyarsky, told a congress of writers and artists early in 1932 that the quality of Soviet films had been declining because scenario writers and producers paid more attention to machines than to people, that this held

true in other arts also and must be corrected. Now that machines have come to stay, the human element can again be stressed.

At this congress, as at all art congresses, playwrights, actors, directors, designers, circus men, musicians, writers, painters, from sophisticated cities rubbed shoulders with worker-actors and artists from Kirghiz and Uzbekistan—many in national costume. And those with famous names from the Meyerhold and Kamerny theatres were seen arguing with representatives of the Tram and Blue Blouse organisations—the workers' theatres.

Stanislavsky, a leader of one of the older schools often at loggerheads with political doctrinaires, has been allowed much leeway in carrying out his theory to present plays in the manner in which the author meant that they should be produced. In return for the Government's tolerance he has given several plays dealing with new themes. He produced *Bread*, the drama of collectivisation already mentioned. Stanislavsky has also produced many of the older plays of Chekhov, Ostrovsky, Gorki, and Tolstoy.

The producer most held in esteem in the Soviet Union is Meyerhold, because of his devotion to a stage "in harmony with the aspirations of the proletarian masses." One of Meyerhold's ardent champions is Anatol Lunacharsky, himself a noted playwright. The latter does not share the opinion of some of the realists that plays should be produced as they were intended to be by the author. He thinks they should be remodelled to fit the spirit of the age. He approves of borrowing plays from modern bourgeois playwrights but urges their presentation "in our own way. We must not be carried away by 'realism,' because authors very often deceive us by true and clever description of details in order to foist on us their wrong ideals." However, sometimes theatrical directors who used to belong to the old intelligentsia misinterpret this attitude, and attempt productions of the classics "in the modern manner." They make basic changes that they may really think conform to the spirit of Bolshevism, but "since they may not really understand this spirit, succeed only in playing an old bourgeois trick like Hamlet in

gold pants," as a communist art critic put it. The interpretation of *Hamlet* given at the Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow in the autumn of 1932 aroused widespread interest and comment by foreigners as well as Russians. It was not liked by the Bolsheviks. It was neither based on true dialectic materialism, they said, nor was it Shakespeare. The Communist Academy, daily newspapers, workers and dramatists, and writers and critics—among them Karl Radek who wrote a long article in *Izvestia*—condemned Nikolai Akimov's production. Akimov presented the drama as a battle for power, but this, they claimed, was no better than the old interpretation which sought to make of Hamlet's traits eternal human characteristics, and saw his struggle merely as the inability of an intellectual to act. Radek writes :

Would Hamlet say "it is good to live" [as this version made him say] when he represented a dying class and stood "powerless" over dead bodies? No. The true Marxian interpretation of the tragedy would relegate the melodrama to the background and would emphasise the class struggle as the source of Hamlet's vacillation. Goethe's interpretation—which is also the hitherto traditional interpretation—sees Hamlet as the struggle between the goal and the will of an individual. For us the decisive factor lies in Hamlet's own words :

The time is out of joint : O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right !

For us Hamlet is a monument to an epoch of upheaval. He is a man of the sixteenth century, of the beginning of the Reformation. He is a person in whom all old beliefs are undermined though not completely destroyed. But he is no longer capable of direct action dictated by his old outlook. Had the production emphasised the breakdown of Hamlet's life philosophy it would have brought out the picture of the disintegration of a class whose representatives were rapidly losing ground. Hamlet would then have become understandable to our workers, before whose very eyes classes are perishing and Hamlet's recur in a different historical setting. Did not Lenin speak of the Hamlets of socialism, applying the term not only to the vacillations of the representatives of the dying class, but also to the hesitations of that section of the rising class which is still bound to the old order and must therefore perish ?

Both the need and the desire for new art forms is everywhere evident. Akimov doubtless felt this. Indeed, Radek says he probably asked himself, in first considering a traditional production of *Hamlet*, "Do I have to look at Hamlet with the eyes of landlords and capitalists? What did we shed our blood for?"⁷ And this desire will lead to increasing experimentation in the arts and to as intense and thoughtful criticism as Akimov's *Hamlet* received. Even for some "bourgeois foreigners" to-day it is difficult to sit through the old operas and ballets in the Bolshoi Theatre.

Nina Petrovna, a young actress, expressed herself vehemently on this topic. "I can't go to the opera any more," she said as we sat gossiping between acts of *The Czar's Bride*. "It's dead. What do we care about these people's troubles? They aren't the problems of real life any more. And the same is true of our plays. How few of them are alive! Our life goes too fast; by the time a drama reaches the stage its theme is already dead."

"Well, one only goes to the theatre for pleasure anyway, to have one's mind taken off the disagreeable things of everyday life, doesn't she?" contributed Olga, a harassed housewife. "I know all I ask is to be amused."

"You're reactionary," scolded Nina. "The theatre and art generally should present some problem that will make one see something more clearly or in a new light; the stage should treat of vital problems of life." The argument proceeded along well-known lines of similar arguments in other countries. But in Soviet Russia the Ninas are in the majority.

"Plays should have something to give," a Communist theatrical director mused as we left the Moscow Art Theatre after a particularly dull play. "Why seat a thousand people in a hall if you haven't something to say to them? If you only want to tickle their sensibilities? This is why we demand the mass play, drama that shall give the background in which a man works and lives and eats as well as loves. He does not love in a vacuum, after all."

⁷ "Za chto my kroo prolivali?" has become proverbial; it is used to indicate the dissatisfaction of persons who fought in the civil war to change conditions and later found that conditions were not changed to suit their own desires.

When I asked Kerzhentsev what kind of movies and plays are encouraged and which disapproved of, I added: "I understand you disapprove of anything dealing only with the fate of an individual."

"Oh, no, we don't disapprove of stories about individuals," he answered, "but we do demand that they shall have some meaning for the mass, that they shall tell something significant for all. Only so can art fulfil the important rôle it should play in helping develop our new human being."

"The biggest service art can render," said Lunacharsky, "is to state generalisations without abstractions, to create images that will live. The proletariat, freeing itself, will at the same time free all mankind, and art, until now always chained to some class ideology, will at last also be truly free."

CHAPTER XVIII TO WHAT END?

After that—we'll see.—SERGEI DAVIDOVICH

A Czarist minister laid it down that "the children of coachmen, servants, cooks, laundresses, and such like should not be encouraged to rise above the sphere to which they were born." The recollection of Czarist discrimination against learning and education among the proletariat makes the usually temperate Lenin bitter and angry. He cries:

What is all that to the many millions who lack the most elementary knowledge, the most primitive culture! While in Moscow to-day ten thousand—and perhaps to-morrow another ten thousand—are charmed by brilliant theatrical performances, millions are crying out to learn the art of spelling, of writing their names, of counting.¹

Clara Zetkin reminds him that maybe the very fact that the masses had so little knowledge made the Revolution possible.

It prevented the mind of the workers and peasants from being stopped up and corrupted with bourgeois ideas and prejudices. Your propaganda and agitation is falling on virgin soil. It is easier to sow and reap where you have not first of all to uproot a whole forest.

Yes, agrees Lenin, that's true, but only for a period, while the old state apparatus is destroyed. "But we destroy not merely for destruction's sake, we destroy in order to build better. Illiteracy is incompatible with the tasks of construction."

¹ Clara Zetkin, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

There are many meanings of the word "culture" in the USSR and none tallies exactly with the Western definition. We mean something like the sum of spiritual, mental, artistic, and character values of a society; the Soviet Union refers to a man's economic, social, intellectual, and hygienic conditions, and above all, to his relation to society.² The Soviets do not consider culture free of purpose, "pure" in the sense in which we speak of pure art or pure science, any more than they believe art or science should exist without the consciousness of a practical objective. To them culture also must be purposive, tightly knit up with the question, "To what end?"

So one reads of "socialist culture," "proletarian culture," "mass culture," "communist culture." Finally it will be only the culture thrown up by the new civilisation of which one will properly be able to speak as "communist culture." Since the proletariat did not have the opportunity under capitalism of becoming literate, they must be given it now. They must be taught to read and write, not only to enjoy the great works of the past, but in order to think and reason and understand the new social ideas.

In one village during a period of three months there were thirty-eight lectures; twenty-four public readings of newspapers followed by comment and discussion; four mock trials; four concerts; four plays; twelve question-and-answer groups; eight group discussions of current politics for women; study circles in drama, collective farming, anti-religion, current politics; an orchestra and a chorus. The village library collected a thousand new volumes and a travelling library with seventeen children visited peasant homes, leaving books. A village wall newspaper was issued with twenty-five correspondents. A movie followed by a debate was shown once a week; and innumerable consultations gave information on legal and trade-union subjects, health, babies, sanitation, hygiene, anti-religion, sex, and care of animals. All in one village. The same thing is going on in all villages where there is enough personnel to do the teaching.

² Klaus Mehnert, *Die Jugend in Sowjet-Russland*, Fischer, Berlin. An English translation is to be published by Harcourt, Brace in 1933.

Culture must be one of the solutions to the problem of what the worker is going to do with the increased leisure the new economy is bringing him. The average length of the working day in Russia in 1913 was 9.87 hours; in 1931 it was 7.02 hours. The goal that Soviet Russia has set itself for 1937 is a five-hour day for all factory workers. Many office workers have already a six-hour day. And there are five or six days of rest in the month.

The society for Down with Illiteracy is at present one of the main cultural tools of the nation. Stations for the liquidation of illiteracy are dotted thick over the Soviet Union. A visit to almost any one of them presents the same dramatic picture: adults with strained wistful faces laboriously wielding scratchy pens, their tongues following, as they spell out the difficult Russian letters. Tadjik mothers suckling their babies, bearded muzhiks with matted hair and high boots, city workers, gypsies, laundresses, straining over copy book or reading primer. At the Tram Workers' Club I find an old man and woman at their lesson. She is learning to read from the primer *Our Buildings*, he to write.

"Why do you want to know how to read?" I ask.

"I want to be able to read the notices on the walls, the newspapers, letters. My son is in the Red Army and does not write me because he knows I can't read."

She is a cleaning-woman in the tram department. She wears a brown woollen shawl round her head; her long-fringed blue eyes show that she must have been comely once.

"Why have you waited so long to learn to read?"

"I never had time before," she answers slowly. "I was dark. But now I want to be part of our new life. Now I have leisure to learn."

The old man used to live in the country twenty miles from the nearest railway station. "The doctor was the only man in our village who had anything, and all he had was a broken samovar," he says. "No one else could read. I used to work ten hours and for two days' work get ten kopecks. I could not learn to write, for I had two children at home, and I had to cook and keep house for them. Now they are dead."

He said he was forty-eight; he looked sixty. His blue eyes

were dull, his trembling hands blue with cold ; yet in his child's copy book, with his stump of a pencil, he was laboriously tracing pothooks and hangers—getting culture. They asked me if we had any people in America like them. I said yes. "Where?"

"Oh, far away, usually, in the mountains."

"Ah, not in the cities!" they sighed sadly.

The teacher was not paid. She was a tram conductor and this was her voluntary social work.

Not much longer will Lenin's bitter cry be true: "How much talent is wasted, how many aspirations crushed!"

It is no longer cultured to be religious. It has been pointed out more than once in this book that religion for the Soviets is synonymous with the cult of superstition, fostered and kept alive by the organised Church. In attacking the Church the Soviets have attacked the whole fabric on which it rests, economic and ideational. Children used to be taught the following catechism:

Q. What does religion teach us as our duty to the Czar?

A. Worship, fidelity, payment of taxes, service, love, and prayer.

The qualities inculcated as the supreme virtues were humility, reverence for authority, piety, and nationalism. These are passive, fatalistic qualities, say the Bolsheviks, calculated to keep the proletariat hopeless, inactive, and servile. "Whereas we teach that if they don't help themselves, no one will, and that they can have the reward for toil and devotion here and now."

In the USSR newspapers spread culture. There are thousands of newspapers and magazines, with editions running into millions. Particularly numerous are the journals and papers for young people. To foreigners Soviet papers may seem one-sided, preachy, uniform, but Soviet citizens read and discuss their contents avidly.

Journalism in the Soviet Union is a new kind of journalism. Its function is definitely educational. Workers and peasants are to learn to write, to express themselves; readers are to be kept informed of what is going on in the country,

to be spurred on to take ever more active part. The "impartial reporter" whose job it is to give facts and nothing else does not exist.

"A newspaper is not merely a collective propagandist and collective agitator," said Lenin; it is also a collective organiser."

Whatever is regarded at any one time as the main task of the country, the newspapers concentrate on. For the last few years it has been the Five Year Plan and "all the news that's fit to print" has been about numbers of tractors produced, the state of the crop, the progress of industries, the building of new plants.

Pravda and *Izvestia*, the chief government newspapers, are now printed in many towns. On June 4, 1931, *Pravda* appeared for the first time simultaneously in Moscow and Kharkov, capital of the Ukraine. The matrices had been hurried to the southern city by plane. Two days later the circulation of the paper had risen by 11,000 in Kharkov. Now the paper is printed in cities from Archangel to Central Asia. Circulation of both newspapers and magazines increases by millions—in a country whose population was three-quarters illiterate a few years ago.

Every district of the Union has its newspaper, each section of society, peasants, Red Army, housewives, Comsomols, Pioneers, working women, and all the professions. There are no "house organs," papers devoted to the interests of religious sects, propaganda trade papers, or papers of other political parties. There are humorous periodicals, the most famous being the weeklies *Crocodile* and *Hippopotamus*, and innumerable technical and serious monthly reviews of literature, the theatre, art, movies.

A feature of the Soviet newspaper is the long essay or dissertation on some question of the day, usually by an expert in the field. Such articles resemble essays in our monthly or quarterly reviews. The Commissar of Education will write about compulsory education; Sergei Dinamov, a member of the Communist Academy, about children's books; Lunacharsky, on the visit of Bernard Shaw; Maxim Gorki, on prisons and prison camps. A Foreign Office official may deal

with recent developments in foreign affairs, an economist with housing. One Moscow evening paper, *Vechernaya Moskva*, is in lighter vein, writing popularly about theatres, chess games, sports, and "human" events. The more serious Communists read it less than do the former bourgeoisie.

There is a well-known woman editor, L. G. Palonskaya, who edits *Za Kommunisticheskoe Prosveshcheniye* (*Toward Communistic Enlightenment*), a Moscow daily with a circulation (in 1931) of 250,000. This paper deals with the cultural revolution, liquidation of illiteracy, polytechnisation of schools, preparation of the new teaching groups. Diverse problems of education, children's books, toys, technical books, libraries, schools, educational methods, are debated. Libraries are warned by the paper not to take certain books if they are thought sociologically or ideologically undesirable, and such advice is usually followed; the newspaper thus becomes a censor. The editorial board consists of the Commissars of Education for the different republics, teachers, and journalists. Editorial board meetings take up such questions as what the paper shall do to forward compulsory education, what educational methods it should sponsor, the part the theatre should play in education, how to make science contribute more directly to the Five Year Plan.

Newspapers become public debating forums. "Our journalists do not stand apart from the happenings they report," said an editor. "They are in life, helping to form it. Everything we say in the paper must make people want to go out and do something about it."

There are innumerable publications covering special fields, both daily newspapers and magazines, literary, theatrical, art, technical, philosophical, and special ones for children and Comsomols. Two are especially devoted to the interests of women; *Rabotnitza* (*Working Woman*), a monthly, rose from 34,000 circulation in 1924 to 500,000 in 1930. The magazines called *Krestianskaya Gazeta* (*Peasant Gazette*) have 3,000,000 circulation and several dozen editions. One of these is called *Peasant Gazette for Those Beginning to Read* with large print and simple pictures; in addition there are special issues for poultry and cattle farmers, sugar-beet

growers, those interested in animal feed, and for the different geographical regions. The subscription is nominal, one rouble four kopecks a year.

Rabotnitza has been in existence nine years. Its purpose is to educate working women. I asked the cheerful and somewhat talkative editress in her office on the Tverskaya what measures she took to increase circulation.

"Our main purpose is not to increase circulation," she said, "but to increase political and social education. Our circulation naturally increases through the active work we do in the field. The paper sends out brigades to places where workers are apathetic. Study groups and classes are held among the women telling them how to increase production and raise their general level of culture. Many women who have just learned to read become our most active cultural workers, and they naturally spread the paper."

Letters to the editor form an important part of the Soviet magazine. They come written on scraps of old newspaper, sheets torn from copy books, old envelopes. Every letter is answered. The questions asked cover hygienic, medical, juridical, health, art, and political subjects. Few are questions about love life or beauty culture, or how to keep husbands or prevent boy friends from being attracted to other girls. They do ask how to get deserter husbands to pay alimony for the children, about nurseries and crèches and playgrounds. Many tell what the women themselves are doing. There is plenty of criticism also, and most magazines have a humour page. I asked the editor of *Rabotnitza* what constituted humour in her magazine.

"If a man writes in to say he doesn't want a woman at the head of his department, we think that funny and satirise it; or if a neighbour writes about seeing a man beat his wife." There are many jokes at the expense of enemies of the régime. Personal stories are not printed, with the exception of brief biographies of women shock-brigaders or women who have won the Order of Lenin or some such honour for industrial service. Material not good enough for acceptance is sent back with criticism, and the worker-correspondent is told how she can improve her style. A revised version may

then be accepted. Material accepted for the magazine is paid for at the rate of 30 roubles a page. Every letter printed is paid for. The editress is paid 275 roubles a month, her assistants 200 or 250. (This was the rate in October, 1931.)

The office staff of *Rabotnitsa* consists of seven women. Three are out in the field most of the time. The assistant editor, who was soon to become editor, had been a servant before the Revolution. "The Revolution gave me schooling and freedom," she said. "I've always wanted to write. And now I'm going to be the editor of this magazine." Another assistant was a textile worker from Tver who had sent in such good contributions that she was called to the office, first on part time, and now was to give her whole time to the magazine.

Wall newspapers appeared spontaneously after the Revolution, when there were few regular newspapers. Now they are found in every factory and institution in the Soviet Union—school, bank, prison, kindergarten, hospital, prophylactorium, clinic, club. These are like a child's scrapbook, consisting of drawings, photographs, cartoons, and typed or handwritten stories, poems, jokes, anecdotes, and criticisms of people in that institution and their actions. Some are quite elaborate, others very crude. Comsomols often take great trouble to produce really artistic wall newspapers. They appear periodically, at different intervals in different institutions; the old wall newspaper is left up on the wall until the new one appears. Each institution keeps its own. They are highly valued and national exhibitions are held, which arouse keen interest.

The radio spreads the same kind of information as newspapers. At the headquarters in the Post and Telegraph Building on the Tverskaya, ten daily radio newspapers are read to listeners. There is a collective farmers' paper, one each for worker-students, the Red Army, mothers, housekeepers, women workers, Comsomols, factory workers, Pioneers. The papers are made up solely of contributions. One newspaper costs from 75 to 150 roubles an issue. All letters received are kept, classified, and answered either over the radio or by mail; the most interesting ones are paid for.

Eighty lawyers deal with questions brought up in letters or personal calls; this is their social work (unpaid), which they perform after their regular work is over.

Music, concerts, meetings, lectures, physical exercises, political addresses, are broadcasted, and also a great deal of self-criticism. Enterprises, offices, farms, schools, censure one another over the radio. Programmes are frequently altered in accordance with requests and criticism from listeners. There is much music for entertainment value only, but the Soviets do not know this phrase. If the proletariat is learning the musical classics, it is being taught as well as entertained.

Millions listen in. Many families have their own radio and there are also collective radios in villages, schools, public squares. In the main squares of cities concerts, lectures, encouragement, abjurations, and violent criticism may be heard issuing from the height of a telegraph pole twenty-four hours a day.

Radio singers and announcers do not become national figures nor do they earn the sums they do in other countries. Their pay is the same as that of other citizens, their names are largely unknown. Government officials frequently broadcast, and foreigners give their impressions of the Soviet Union, sometimes in their own language.

Movies spread the teaching propaganda of the Soviet Union as enthusiastically as the radio and newspapers. I was in Moscow when the first talking picture was shown in the summer of 1930. When the lights went out there was utter stillness. First the Five Year Plan was explained, its aim, what everyone must do toward its fulfilment, how far it was carrying out its schedule. They were not always being careful enough of machinery!

Without warning or title the picture changed into a large engineering shop with lathes spinning, gears turning, belts running. The audience sat spellbound at this view of their god, machinery. Many in that audience had never seen a machine. A party of Americans in the movie house began to look at the machinery with the same wonder and thrill as the Russians.

Then came the feature. A peasant is ploughing his little strip with one horse yoked to the old peasant plough. He sows, spreading the seed by hand. Summer comes ; he reaps with a scythe, gathers and ties up the grain slowly, his back bent. He is weary, looks at his work, at the sinking sun, shading his eyes. . . .

A factory is making agricultural machinery. Flash of wheels, gears turning, pulleys, shafts, presses, steel girders, wheels flying past. A member of the Politburo mounts a platform and speaks to the crowd, to the upturned peasant faces rutted like their own hardened mud. He points to the grain elevator being built. A hush is over the audience of a thousand people as the grain elevator grows from the ground. As they say the word "elevátor" in whispering subtitles, it has almost a religious intonation.

More contrasts between handwork and machine work : steam shovels, concrete-mixers. The tired "individual" muzhik shades his eyes from the sun ; the grain elevator rises steadily. Title : *The Elevator Must Be Ready. The Crops Won't Wait*. The peasants stand staring ; close-ups are shown of their creased, weather-beaten, sceptical faces. Suddenly a light breaks over them. The elevator is finished ! The scaffolding crashes ; grain pours out like a stream of milk. The peasant faces gaze with stunned astonishment. It is the face of the Middle Ages gasping at the twentieth century.

The last talkie was a little alphabet picture for illiterates. *We Wish to Make Things Easier for You : Look and Understand*. The letter A is flashed on the screen, written and printed, small and large : A A a a. A peasant brings her baby to the field. He hides in the tall corn. The letter U comes on the screen, in writing and in print, small and large. The little boy cries ; he is lost. The mother looks for him, and hunting, calls him with the long, wailing Russian call "A-u !" This is the first lesson.

One goes out of the cinema feeling that machinery and learning to read are two of the great and thrilling experiences the world holds. And Americans are as much moved as the Russian audience.

So education ("propaganda") is carried on twenty-four

hours of the day in the Soviet Union, and culture is growing out of it, as the grain elevator rose from the stubble field.

Methods of government belong to the political culture of a country. In this sphere Soviet Russia is evolving a culture never before known. The Soviets have grasped the theory of evolution to the point at which they act on it. We say government must be flexible ; the culture of Russia acts on the saying. In the Soviet Union they do not introduce laws almost impossible of repeal. They are always thinking of the stage they are in. "This is a transition period." . . . "We have no communism yet." . . . "We are building the road to a communist state"—these phrases are heard over and over. The Soviet State is showing that government can be carried on with evolution in mind. It has made an important contribution to political science by demonstrating a method of social engineering that is scientific, influenced primarily by long-term economic considerations. And the people are taken into the confidence of the government. They must consider the problems of the state their own. Krupskaya says :

Workers and peasants should know the truth no matter how hard and bitter it is. The working masses are not children, and need not be consoled with fairy tales. Working people must build their kingdom on earth.³

Our knowledge of psychology is being applied, in the propaganda that is honest teaching, in the conscious planned preparation for jobs, in the open recognition of fundamental human needs and the motives that move human beings.

When the Soviets set out to abolish certain attitudes and behaviour they adopt a logical, scientific method. They lay down the conditions in which these things cannot flourish, and at the same time influence men to control and alter their behaviour by explaining its causes and creating awareness.

As an illustration one may take the methods adopted by the Soviet Government to wipe out anti-Semitism. The

³ N. C. Krupskaya, *Woman and Religion*, 1931. Not as yet translated into English.

difference between the treatment of Jews before the Revolution and after is one of the most spectacular of the changes that have occurred. And during a time when anti-Semitic prejudice was rising in other countries.

Under the Czar all minor nationalities in Russia were oppressed, but the treatment of Jews was a world-wide scandal. The Bolsheviks believe the oppression of the Jews was due to economic causes. Jews were not allowed to own land, they were kept out of the army and navy, they could not attend universities. They lived on the outskirts of cities in a Pale of Settlement and were not allowed to go into the city, were compelled to enter non-productive professions, and the hostility of industrious workers and peasants who had dealings with them as non-productive people was aroused. Economic and political discrimination led to social discrimination.

Social and political disabilities against Jews were removed by those Soviet laws which guaranteed the freedom and equality of all minor races and nationalities. In the new Russia, race, colour, or nationality is no bar to any trade, profession, or public office. At the same time economic measures have been taken to draw the Jews into industry and agriculture. Special colonies were started. Jews became the economic equals of other productive races in the USSR. Some of them hold high government positions. Inter-marriage used to be practically impossible; but now that all marriage is a private affair, and wholly secular, religious differences are losing their significance, as are religious ceremonies altogether.

Where one finds Jews still discriminated against one finds it is when they are members of the bourgeoisie, and then they are under-privileged as other bourgeois elements, not because they are Jews.

As a result of this policy of creating an economic basis for full social and political equality of all races and nationalities, the character of the Jewish population has changed in the Soviet Union. Large numbers now work on farms and in factories. By the middle of 1931 half of the Jewish population was employed in productive labour; this was eight

times the number so employed in Czarist days. The heretofore predominating small-trading element has to-day practically ceased to exist.

As with other national minorities, the culture of the Jews was given very little opportunity to develop under the Czars. The Bolsheviks have formed special settlements both to attract Jews on to the land and to enable them to develop their own culture. In all specifically Jewish settlements Yiddish or Hebrew is used in schools and courts, books, newspapers, and magazines; research into the language, literature, and history of the Jews is stimulated. Special Jewish schools, libraries, reading-rooms, playgrounds for children, agricultural and labour institutes, and liquidation of illiteracy points have been set up, and there are travelling Jewish theatres, Jewish music and drama schools. A new settlement for Jews of all nations was recently started on the borders of Manchuria at Biro-Bidjan, a district of ten million acres of virgin soil rich in natural resources. By 1933 if there are enough settlers it is to become a Jewish autonomous territorial unit. It will become a second Jewish homeland, but under Soviet rule and Soviet regulation.

No Soviet institution discriminates against the Jewish worker and peasant; pogroms have vanished and are unthinkable, and the new Soviet citizen is growing up without the prejudice of anti-Semitism.⁴

The policy regarding the Jews described here is part of a general policy affecting all the racial and national groups within the USSR. Because the Soviet Union is based on the philosophy that economic changes are the basis of other changes, it gives special privileges to races that were discriminated against before, so that these may have a real opportunity of catching up.

Another example of the Soviet scientific method in social affairs is the attempt to wipe out drunkenness, one of the worst curses of Russia. Moral equivalents are established; people can go to the club, the movie, the theatre, the Park of Culture and Rest; they can travel, indulge in sports. Drink is made not the only "cheap and pleasurable"

⁴ See Chapter II.

pastime possible. The Soviet citizen is abjured not to drink by increasing propaganda, humorous posters, all the force of the moral pressure available. A decree of the Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars) in 1926 authorised every type and degree of instruction as to the harmfulness of alcohol to be introduced into the schools. In club and restaurant, factory, park and pleasure place, hang posters, some drawn by the best Soviet artists, such as Deni. Where people come together and drink there are lectures about the harmfulness of alcohol. Pioneers and Comsomols and even little Oktobriionoks are charged to agitate, and they pour their withering scorn on workers, peasants, employees, or their own fathers and mothers when these over-indulge. The fight for sobriety, the struggle on the alcoholic front, is among the biggest cultural battles in the USSR.

"The more quickly we liquidate alcoholism the easier will it be to realise the ideals of communism," writes a Communist official. "We give our Pioneers as well as Comsomols and Party members the task to try for absolute sobriety," another. "This task must be fulfilled. We would be babies if we thought that by prohibiting drink every one would cease drinking at once. Drunkenness must be approached as if it were a difficult social illness."

Incorrigible drunkards are taken to homes and hospitals for alcoholics. They are given several chances at cures. If they are sick or psychopathological they are treated in homes and clinics. But if an alcoholic given every chance to avail himself of the means to cure himself fails to do so, his weakness is such that he can never become a trusted worker. Like the incorrigible prostitute, he has overstepped the delicate line between "socially sick man" and enemy of the Revolution. He is a traitor and, so a social worker informed me, may be sent with political exiles to Solofki in Siberia.

The new culture is illustrated in new conceptions and new terms that are already a part of everyday language. Social inventions such as self-criticism, socialist competition, public censure on a grand scale, approval and disapproval as incentives to work, show the distance from the old societies that Soviet society has travelled. So also does the growing

ignorance among the young of terms and words we are used to. Maurice Hindus tells of the little boy who stared when asked whether he wanted to be rich. "In our Soviet Union, citizen, we have deposited the word 'rich' in the archives."

The military terminology of to-day reflects the peacetime war the Soviet Union is engaged in. In a famous phrase Stalin calls science "a fortress to be stormed," in another, a "powerful ally." War is waged on kilometers, on dirt, on the old bourgeois failings of possessiveness and acquisitiveness. "Down with the kitchen! We must destroy this little penitentiary," cries Ilin, the children's writer. And "Chemistry must conclude an alliance between metal and forest." "Weakest points" in the "constructive front" are pointed out, brigades "attack" narrow places, medical or legal or sanitary "volunteers" are "mobilised" for "light cavalry" to "command attacks" on disease.

I have shown Russian newspapers to Russians who left the country in 1917; they are puzzled by words and phrases they have never heard before. Some of these words: *sosnatel'-jnye*, the responsible, conscious citizen; *obyvatel'-ye*, the irresponsible, indifferent bourgeois; *mestchanstvo*, bourgeoisness, Babbitry, used before to some extent, have come into universal usage now. Others are new, such as: *proletcult*, proletarian culture; *vydvizhenstvo*, the advance of worker correspondents; *udarnik*, shock-brigader; *samokritika*, self-criticism; *pragulchik*, slacker; *vreditel*, damager; *proriff*, tear in the Plan; *vsyat na buxiv*, to take on towing. Their increasing number indicates the distance the new culture is putting between itself and the old.

The attainment of culture in the Soviet Union does not always mean as yet the development of an all-round personality. The characteristic of the Soviet citizen, at present, is that he is a socialised, socialistic, social-minded human being.

The polytechnic school combining theory and practice, has as its main purpose to rear efficient, skilled, productive workers. The Soviet school does not set out merely to "educate," without plan, purpose or guiding idea; it sets

out, with awareness, to educate communistically. A recent pamphlet reads :

The polytechnic school is in the hands of the Soviet power one of the means of abolishing the division of society into classes, of liquidating the opposition between town and country, and of wiping out the distinction between brain and hand work. And this can only be achieved by closely relating schools with plants, tractor stations, collective and state farms, by combining theoretical and practical work and attracting scholars to active part in socialist building.

So always is the purpose of culture stressed. Man, like art, must not merely be good ; he must be good for something.

The cultured Soviet citizen must have some of the bourgeois virtues, without being bourgeois. He must be punctual, efficient, orderly, neat in appearance if possible. But these matters do not come first. Numerous pamphlets issued by the League of Communist Youth attempt to distinguish between culture and *mestchanstvo* (bourgeoisness, Babbittry). An amusing new phrase has been invented to point the distinction. Too punctilious a carrying-out of the bourgeois cultural virtues—good manners, nice clothes, tidy hair, and a sufficient knowledge of the plays and movies of the day to be able to discuss them—do not constitute a “cultured person,” but a “cultured American.” The final distinction between cultured and uncultured is whether a person is giving himself, his services, the best that is in him, for the good of society. Culture may include such fields as tourism, sport, political and practical education, outward and inward appearance. Clean fingernails may be called “cultured,” a well-applied knowledge of botany, a strict sense of duty, while cursing, drinking, or smoking, ignorance of Marxian dialectics, and going to church may be “uncultured.”

“One who never turned his back but marched breast forward . . .” wrote Robert Browning, long before the Russian Revolution was dreamed of. Yet he describes in that poem the hero of modern Russia.

I asked many young people in Russia : “What is a Bolshevik ?” The question interested them, although few had

given it thought. One day a group of young people were sitting around the samovar and we brought up the subject.

“We are too busy to work out these abstract problems at present,” said Lida, the young Georgian, full-lipped and black-haired with flashing white teeth. “We’re more eager to build our Bolshevik than to theorise about him.” She thought a moment and said : “I should say he’s hard, steady, something you can rely on—someone who in the last resort will sacrifice his own interests for something bigger.”

“Of course that he’s a man of action goes without saying,” said Tanya, a mischievous brown-eyed student. “He must know what he wants and go out and get it ; no shilly-shallying, hesitating, wondering this way and that, the way the spineless old intellectual used to do. ‘Dare I kiss her ? I wonder what she would think ? I must seem as if I do not notice her look at me. Did she really look at me that way ? Perhaps I am mistaken and it is my imagination. . . .’ No no ! We expect our lovers to be aggressive, bold, and have courage, as we have !”

Alexandra Mikhailovna, who was a little older than the others, smiled. “You are always so impetuous, Tanya ! Yet you are right this time. We have for the time being shut the gates of thought, discussion, and doubt on certain fundamentals, gates we shall only open again when the system we are building is established. In the transition period we have got to have one type of person, self-assertive, audacious, strong-willed, dogmatic even to the point of fanaticism. . . .”

“You sound as if you regretted it, a little.” I smiled.

“Yes, Shura is one of the old intellectuals herself,” laughed Tanya. “She really admires the type. Vitia is her type, for though he’s one of us, he’s thoughtful and gentle and . . . and . . .” She stopped, blushing. Even Vitia might have seen the state of Tanya’s feelings.

“An intellectual !” cried Shura, and Tanya half started to apologise. “What is it our *Amerikanka* says ? ‘When you call me that, smile !’”

“Well, our intellectuals are being recognised as useful once more,” broke in Vitia, a young worker in Electrozavod.

"They see now that probably the Soviet order will live and they may as well accept it. Stalin's speech has given them heart."

The play *Bread* illustrates two types of Bolshevik—the good Communist and the not-so-good. Raievsky, a handsome, intelligent young man, travelled and cultured, who has been a Party member for years, is sent to a village on a grain collection. His mission is to persuade the peasants to give up their grain voluntarily. Mikhailov, who sends him, a simple, modest young Communist who had been a working-man, never spares himself, understands and sympathises with the common man. These two are old friends. In action Mikhailov is concentrated, quick, uncompromising, and can be iron with himself. The pressure of work leaves him little leisure for entertaining his wife, who, bored, goes with Raievsky to the village. The peasants become obstreperous and all the Communists are in danger. Raievsky is brave enough, but lacks judgment; at the moment of danger he loses his head, creates a panic, whips the peasants up to greater fury, then bitterly reproaches them and threatens them with punishment. Mikhailov comes down to the village, strong, self-possessed, in command of himself and the antagonistic peasants. In a short time he quiets them and persuades them to give up their grain voluntarily. He does the job. When his wife chooses to stay with the more dramatic Raievsky, Mikhailov, though he is very much in love with her, lets her go. She reproaches him bitterly for putting his work before everything.

"Do you love her when she talks like that, or don't you?" Mikhailov asks himself, but leaves the question unanswered and goes back to town without her. There is nothing else to do. "This is not the time to cry over a broken heart," he says. One knows he will suffer, but his suffering will not interfere with his duty.

The modern hero of Russia, rather than the soldier, warrior, poet, or athlete, is the proletarian worker who achieves some singular success in production; the scientific manager, the person who is capable of planning and executing vast schemes of production, mechanisation, rationalisation. The

Bolshevik in life, literature, the drama, and the factory cares about the fate of society, does all in his power toward moulding it. But he must not act unintelligently or blindly. He must know where he is going. Consciousness, awareness, insight, are Red virtues as much as energy, activity, will power.

The day before I left Russia Sergei Davidovitch came to tea. We were discussing youth and its ideals. I knew I might not see him for a long time, for he would not be leaving the Soviet Union.

"What do you—you personally—want most in the world, Seryozha?" I asked.

"*Street Sozialism*—to build socialism," he said.

"And then?"

"And then?—*Mirovaia Revolutzia*—the World Revolution."

"And after that?"

"And after that?" He paused, threw back his fair hair, looked out of the window over the little red Russian church blanketed now with snow, to the cloudless sky beyond. "*A potom—uvidim!* After that—we'll see!"

RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE USSR

These figures illustrating the growth of culture and education in the Soviet Union are taken from the *Soviet Union Review*, December, 1932, and official Russian sources.

I. EDUCATION

A. EDUCATION OF ILLITERATES

<i>Year</i>	<i>Adults Registered in Literacy Courses</i>
1930	17,366,000
1931	24,820,000
1932	20,913,000

The decrease in the 1932 figure is due to the number who have learned to read and write, perfectly or imperfectly.

B. GROWTH OF LITERACY IN ADULTS BETWEEN 16 AND 50

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>In Cities</i>	<i>In Villages</i>
Pre-Revolution....	27.0	...	...
1926	55.5	79.7	49.1
1930	67.3	83.9	62.1
1931	79.4	90.0	75.9

Over 58,000,000 illiterate adults have become literate during the first four years of the Five Year Plan.

C. CHILDREN EDUCATED IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SYSTEM

Year	Total	In Villages	Children's Playgrounds
1917 .....	.....	.....	35,000
1930	1,300,000	636,300	1,753,500
1931	5,100,000	3,200,000	4,222,800
1932	10,000,000	6,700,000	6,000,000

D. CHILDREN IN PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIARY GRADES

Year	Total
Pre-Revolution	7,800,000
1928-1929	12,074,000
1930	20,400,000
1932	24,700,000

E. HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Year	Total	Students	Technical	Factory and Apprentice Schools
Pre-Revolution ..	91	124,000	46,100	.....
1928 .....	..	.....	.....	250,000
1932	500	525,700	1,034,400	1,863,000

At present the factory and plant schools give industry about 40 per cent of the skilled workers it needs. Women now constitute 28.9 per cent of all the students in the higher schools.

II. MAGAZINES, BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS, LIBRARIES

A. MAGAZINES. There are 2,000 magazines in the USSR, weekly and monthly, literary, scientific, art, sports, theatre, movie, economic, professional, and political. The annual circulation is 391,000,000 copies.

B. BOOKS. During the fifteen years from 1917 to 1932, 376,000 titles were published as compared to the 250,000 titles published during the last century of Czarist rule.

Year	Titles	Number of Copies
1914 .....	.....	130,000,000
1929-1930	40,800	400,000,000
1931-1932	53,500	800,000,000

The average is now four times the pre-war level.

Year	Book Consumption Per Capita
1927	1.5
1928	2.5
1930	5.4

C. NEWSPAPERS. 1,600 newspapers are issued in 83 languages of the national minorities. 134 of the 181 nationalities and tribes now have a written language.

Year	Newspapers	Circulation
1913	859	2,700,000
1928	605	8,800,000
1929	692	10,600,000
1930	1,200	22,600,000
1931	3,000	36,000,000
1932	5,600	38,000,000

Pravda has a circulation of 2,200,000, *Izvestia* one of 2,000,000. Both newspapers are published in other cities simultaneously with the Moscow edition, the matrices being carried by aeroplane. About thirty newspapers are published in Moscow. The *Peasants' Gazette*, now published once every three days, has a circulation of over 3,000,000. There are 2,000,000 worker and peasant correspondents. From 1922 to 1931 the circulation of American newspapers increased 12.5 per cent, while that of the Soviet Press increased 2,500 per cent.

D. LIBRARIES. The USSR has recently unified its library service. The Russian Public Library in Leningrad has over 5,500,000 volumes; the Lenin Library in Moscow, which

will be the largest library in the Soviet Union, gave out 1,400,000 volumes in 1931, had 350,000 visitors, and served 300 industrial, state, scientific, and other institutions.

III. WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

A present there are 5,715,000 women working in enterprises and institutions.

Year	Party Members	Percent- age	Comsomols	Percentage
1922	40,683	7.7	63,846*	15.7
1932	512,000	16.0	1,624,570	30.3
		* 1924		

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

Year	Women's		County		Central	
	Dele- gates*	Village Soviets	Executives Commit- tees	City Soviets	Executive Committee Members	Candidates
1923	95,000	9.9†	8.1	18.	5.	6.
1932	2,500,000	21.0	20.5	25.8	96.	70.

* Women's delegates are women elected to take special courses and do practical work in Soviet, co-operative or trade-union organizations.

† 1926.

Communal restaurants have increased rapidly, particularly in the past year. In 1929, 730,300 persons were served in the communal and co-operative restaurants and factory kitchens—now 11,500,000. This sets the women free for public life.

WOMEN STUDENTS

Year	Illiterates Studying	Girls in Primary Schools
1924-5	500,000	2,777,700
1931-2	8,000,000	8,244,100

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INDEX

- ABORTION, 121, 126, 137, 142-43, 146
 Agriculture, collectivisation of, 16 *n*, 31, 102, 224, 236; children study, 207; students of, 88-89, 233
 Alcoholism. *See* Drunkenness.
 Alimony, 119-20, 132, 193, 195, 204-05; laws, 140-42. *See also* Divorce.
 Alleluieva, Nadya, 101, 116
 American: "cultured," 298; engineers, 67-69, 77; methods, 62; tourists, 87
 Amundsen, Roald, 237
 Anti-Semitism. *See* Jews.
 Appleton (engineer), quoted, 105
 Architects, 251-52
 Art, 100, 227, 263-82, 289; education, 239; galleries, 47, 276
 Artel, meaning of, 184 *n*
 Artists, 22, 230, 247-67. *See also* Illustrators.
 Artiukhina, A. V., 107
 Astor, Lady, quoted, 52
 "Auntishness," 227
 Automobiles, 258
 Azure Cities, quoted, 50
 BABBITRY, 43, 297, 298
 Bach, J. S., 274
 Ballet, 275
 Baptiva, 241
Batrak, def. of, 85 *n*
 Bebel, F. A., 125
Bedniak, def. of, 85 *n*
 Beethoven, 88, 227
 Behaviour, rules of, 14, 35, 121-22; training in, 230
 Besprizornie, 38, 155, 179, 183, 192, 222, 247, 268; def. of, 38 *n*
 Bezymensky, Alexander, quoted, 67
 Bianki, V., 247
 Bibikova, 240
 Bible, ignorance of, 47, 142
 Biedny, Demian, 237
 Birth control, 123, 142, 151, 154
 Blake, William, 247
 Blouse, historical mistake, 54
 Bogat, E., 107
 Bolshevik, def. of, 16 *n*. *See also* Old Bolsheviks.
Bolshevik (magazine), 42; quoted, 31-32
 Books, statistics of, 304-05; children's, 228-30, 234-45, 248-50
 Bourgeoisie, 15, 19, 26-28, 48-49, 97, 138, 220-21, 237; virtues of, 298; def. of, 55 *n*
Bourzhui, 221; def. of, 55 *n*
 Boyarsky, quoted, 278
Bread (play), 41, 279, 300
 Briusov, V., 101
 Bronner, Dr. V., quoted, 154, 178-79
 Browning, Robert, quoted, 298
Buit explained, 27
 CALENDAR, SOVIET, 16 *n*, 166
 Capitalism. *See* Communism, contrasted with capitalism.
 Cell, Party, def. of, 15 *n*
Cement (Gladkov), 73, 130; quoted, 114
 Central Asia, 66, 97, 130, 159
 Central Control Commission, 25, 31-32
 Checka, meaning of, 199 *n*
 Chekhov, A. P., 101
 Chicherin, G. V., 94
 Chiffrin, N., 236, 242
 Childbirth, formerly, 95, 104-05; now, 104-05, 154
 Children, 137, 206-50; adoption of, 118; as propagandists, 58, 296; backward, 165-66; care of, 151-52; delinquent, 198; importance of, in marriage, 118

125, 129, 134, 140, 141, 169; in communes, 108, 147; interests of, 202, 220-22; maladjusted, 171-74; names of, 148; physical appearance of, 215; play of, 223-50; punishment of, 157, 174; theatres for, 226-27; towns for, 147-48. *See also* Books; Games; Magazines; Newspapers; Parents; Songs; Teachers; Toys.
 Children's Travelling (Wandering) Exhibit, 227-30
Chistkas, 25
Chleb (Bread), 41, 279, 300
 Chopin, F. F., 274
 Christening, Oktobriionok, 215
 Christmas, 53-54, 211, 227
 Chudnitskaya, Sidonie, quoted, 225-26
 Chukovsky, K., 240, 249, 250; quoted, 243-45
 Classless order, 10-11, 27
 Cleanliness, 14, 209, 214, 230, 240, 301
 Clinics, 164-65
 Clothing, 41-42, 45-46, 74
 Coleridge, S. T., 247
 Collegina, A., 107
*Commandirovka*s, meaning of, 127 n
 Communes, 145-47, 258-59, 261
 Communism, and socialism, 16 n; contrasted with capitalism, 10-13, 18-28, 33, 39-40, 47, 52, 56-57, 64-65, 71-75, 81, 86-87, 94, 98, 102-04, 116, 122-23, 130-31, 138, 149, 164, 170, 176, 182-83, 197 n, 212, 225-29, 246, 253, 260, 263-64, 266, 273, 284, 296
 Communist Academy, 13
 Communist party, 15 n; duties of members of, 30; official press of, 42 n; purgings of, 24; sympathisers with, 25
 Communist, the ideal, 37-38, 75, 298-301
 Competition, socialist, 39, 62-66, 211, 296
 Comrade, 45, 49
 Comsomols, 25, 33, 42 n, 50-55, 68, 130, 137, 138, 213-15, 222, 288, 290, 295, 298; def. of, 15 n
 "Concrete, a," 206
 Contraceptives, 143

Contraction of names, Soviet, 17 n
 Cooper, Col. Hugh, quoted, 69, 105
 Crèches, 104, 106, 110
 Criminals, Soviet treatment of, 76-77, 165-66, 188-205. *See also* Punishment.
Crocodile (book), 243-45 (quoted); (weekly), 287
 Culture, Soviet, 13, 15, 283-301

DANCING, 274-75
 Deneko, Olga, 236
 Deni, 237
 Deutsch, Babette, tr. quoted, 244-45
 Deviationist, def. of, 43
 Dialectic materialism and American engineer, 75
 Dinamov, Sergei, 287; quoted, 87-88
 Diplomats, training of, 93-94
 Diseases, occupational, 81
 Dispensaries, 164
 Divorce, 31, 104, 107, 110, 118, 124-34 *passim*, 139, 193; formerly, 95, 137. *See also* Alimony.
 Dnieprostroy, 253; dam, 62, 240-41
 Dolls, 231-32
 Drama. *See* Bread; Theatre.
 Drunkenness, 33-34, 155, 169, 192, 201-03, 298; treatment of, 58, 165-66, 168, 234, 295-96; punishment for, 183
 Duranty, Walter, quoted, 70

Economicheskaya Zhizn, 42
 Education, 57, 74, 83-94, 104-05, 203, 206-22, 287; of convicted persons, 198-203; of prostitutes, 181-82; of mothers, 248-49; of women, 108, 110, 306; in old Russia, 72-73, 212; sex, 149-62; statistics, 303-04. *See also* Books; Polytechnisation.
 Eighth of March, 54
 Eisenstein, S. M., 90
 Embezzlement, 192
 Engels, Friedrich, 88, 255; quoted, 33
 Engineers, 68-69, 75-77
 England, 45
 Ethics. *See* Morals.

FAIRY TALES, 157, 219, 249-50
 Family, 26, 31, 146; future form of, 27, 108-09, 137-48, 256-60
 Feeble-minded, 165-66
 Fellow traveller. *See* Communist party, sympathisers with.
 First of May, 54, 242
 Five Year Plans, 10 n, 13, 30, 43, 44, 58, 60, 84, 90, 117, 123, 128, 129, 148, 167, 193, 216, 218, 231, 234, 235, 240, 241, 271, 272, 287, 288, 291; gaps, tears in, 59, 62, 297; purpose of, 70; song of, 224; def. of, 16 n.
 Food, 41
 Forgery, 192
 Former people. *See* Bourgeoisie; Intelligentsia.
 Freeman, Joseph, quoted, 57, 72
 Freud, Sigmund, 170-71; quoted, 142
 GAMES, CHILDREN'S, 229, 234
 Gastiev, Alexei, quoted, 67
 Gladkov, Feodor, 73, 130, 272; quoted, 114
 Goethe, 280
 Gonorrhea. *See* Venereal diseases.
 Gorki, Maxim, 227, 240, 279, 287; quoted, 68
 Gosizdat, 93, 235, 245; meaning of, 93
 Gosplan, meaning of, 44
 GPU, meaning of, 199
 Grigoriev, Sergei, 247
 Grinko, G. T., quoted, 15
 Gurevich and Grosser, quoted, 140
 Gurvich, Dr. B. R., 187

Hamlet, 280-81
 Happiness, 13, 42, 52, 249
 Health, 104, 163-65; education, 229. *See also* Mental hygiene.
 Hellmann, L., quoted, 127
 Hemingway, Ernest, 52
 Hindus, Maurice, quoted, 116, 297
Hippopotamus (weekly), 287
 Hitler, Adolf, 42
 Holidays for workers, 73, 78, 285
 Hooliganism, 35, 156, 192, 201, 203
 Hospitals, 164-65
 Housework, 108-10, 134; former, 103

Housing Commission responsible for baby, 141
 Housing conditions, 41, 73-74, 106, 143, 144, 157, 179-80, 192-94, 268; at Rehabilitation Colony, 199; of students, 90-91; planning new, 251-62
 Humour. *See* Jokes.
 Huxley, Julian, quoted, 67
 Hygiene: industrial, 80-81, 164; mental, 163-75, 180-81

ILIN, M., 247, 259 n; quoted, 109-10, 297
 Illegitimacy; abolished, 142, 144; former, 137
 Illiteracy, advantage of, 88; liquidating, 108, 110, 208, 216, 249, 283, 285-86, 288-89, 292-93, 303, 306; of women, 108, 110
 Illustrators, 235-45
 Incentives, new, 56-69; mass, 62-63
 Individualism, 12, 57, 251
 Industrial: Financial Plan, 52, 60, 224; hygiene, 80, 164; psychiatry, 168-70; Party trial, 76
 Industry, socialisation of, 16 n; women in, 105, 306
 Inferiority complex, 170
 Insane, 165-66
 Institutes: Central Psycho-Physical, 80; Kharkov Research, 216 n; Neurological for Nervous Babies, 171; Pedagogical, 88; of Mental Hygiene, 168; of Mother and Child, 117, 154, 233; of Social Hygiene, 129, 176; of Vocational and Experimental Psychology, 225; Town Planning, 147; Venereological, 178
 Intelligentsia, old, 92; new, 93
 International: Labour Defence, 206 n; Labour Office, 56
 Internationalism, 43, 232, 241-42, 249
 Inventors, 22, 61
Iskorka, 245; quoted, 246
Izvestia (daily), 42, 287; quoted, 105, 106, 212, 255-58, 280
 JEALOUSY TABOO, 122, 129, 130, 192; new type of, 135-36

Jews, 24, 247, 294-95
Jitkov, 247
Jizneva, O. A., 267-68
Job-changing, 79-80
Jokes, Soviet, 59, 63, 68, 141-42, 289
Journalism, 286; training for, 93-94
Judges, 190-91, 194-96

KAJEVNIKOV, 247
Kalinin, Michael, 181, 188, 278
Kerzhentsev, quoted, 273, 282
Kindergartens, 108, 109
Kirichka, Mme., 207
Kisch, E. E., 97
Kissing on train fined, 117
Kolhoz, def. of, 31. *See* Agriculture, collectivisation of.
Kollontay, Alexandra, 48, 94, 107, 121-23 (quoted), 125, 134; quoted, 117
Kolnai, Dr., quoted, 170
Koltzov, Michael, 275
Komsomolskaya Pravda, 37-38, 222; quoted, 52-53, 145, 219, 223, 231-32, 250, 277-78
Konashevich, V., 230
Korsakov, Dr., 169
Kozariov, Alexander, quoted, 39
Krasnaya Nov, 42; quoted, 98
Krassin, Leonid, 94
Krestianin, def. of, 85 n
Krestianskaya magazines, 288
Kropotkin, Prince P. A., 101
Krupskaya, N. C., 18, 25, 51, 102, 107, 226, 250; quoted, 99-100, 147-48, 244-45, 293
Krylenko, N. B., quoted, 34, 119
Kulaks, 99, 102, 111, 186, 220, 223; def. of, 85 n
Kunitz, Joshua, quoted, 64

LABOUR CODE, 79 n
Lassalle, Ferdinand, 88; quoted, 25
Lawcourts, 188-96, 202-05
Lawyers, 193-94, 196, 204
Laws, 99, 196, 204-05, 293, 294; alimony, 140-42, 154; child-adoption, 118; divorce, 154; for children, 199; labour, 79 n; marriage, 118-21, 131-32, 154; old, 205; on prostitution, 177, 184; venereal disease, 154

League of Communist Youth. *See* Comsomols.

Lebedev, A. V., 230, 237-39
Lebedeva, 107
Legislating morality, 26-28
Lenin, V. I., 26, 47, 71, 88, 89, 91, 148, 174, 196, 202, 240, 261, 275, 280; quoted, 11-13, 16 n, 28, 40, 55, 94, 97-99, 102, 114-15, 124, 150, 170, 177, 183, 185, 263, 264-65, 269-70, 283-84, 286, 287
Leonov, Leonid, 266
Levin, B., 247
Liashko, Nicolai, 73
Libedinsky, Yuri, 73
Libraries, 74, 281, 288, 316
Lidin, Vladimir, quoted, 51, 266
Litvinov, Maxim, 42, 94
Living quarters. *See* Housing conditions.
Lunacharsky, A. V., 121, 273, 275, 279, 287; quoted, 9, 13, 15, 95, 97, 137-38, 245, 282

MACHINERY IN THE NEW ORDER, 9, 36, 66-69, 81-82, 223-24, 231-32, 236, 239-43, 250, 261, 274, 292-93
Magazines, 42, 94, 286-89; for children, 245-46, 288; statistics of, 304
Magnitogorsk, 240, 254, 255
Manners, good. *See* Behaviour.
Marriage: in the old order, 95-98, 112, 132, 137; in the USSR, 29-32, 103, 104, 109-36, 154, 168-69; laws, 118-21, 131-40, 154; Mohammedan, 30, 97. *See also* Divorce; Family.
Marshak, S., 247; quoted, 246-50, 248
Marx, Karl, 24, 26, 36, 47, 78, 88, 91, 181, 188; quoted, 10-13, 81
Mass incentives, 61-63
Masturbation, 155, 156, 161
Maugham, W. S., quoted, 206
May, Ernest, quoted, 253-54
Mayakovsky, V. V., 36-37
Mayer, Hannes, quoted, 252-53
Mehner, Klaus, quoted, 284
Meksin, Jacob, quoted, 227-28, 235, 243, 245
Mensheviks, 221; def. of, 16 n; trial of, 76-77, 203, 220, 234

Merkuleva, 247
Mestchansko, meaning of, 297
Mental hygiene, 163-75, 180
Meyerhold, V. E., 279
Misfits. *See* Criminals; Drunkenness; Mental hygiene; Prostitution.
Mitchell, L. S., 243
Mogorich, 73
Mohammedanism, 30, 97
Molotov, V. M., 181
Money, 19, 118, 261. *See also* USSR, money rewards in.
Monogamy, 118, 121, 129, 140
Mooney, Thomas, 207
MOPR, meaning of, 206 n
Morals: in the old order, 25-26; in the USSR, 17-39. *See also* specific headings.
Moscow, 254, 256-58
Movies, 267-68, 275-79, 281-82, 284, 291-93; need for, 100; training for, 89-91; workers in, 22
Murder, 130, 192
Museums, 276; for children, 227-31; for the Emancipation of Women, 100-04, 233
Music, 272-74, 302; operas, 278, 281; students of, 87-88
Muzhik, def. of, 85 n

NAPOLÉON I, 71
Narcomindel, meaning of, 94
Narcompros, meaning of, 40
Nationalism, 23
Negroes, 23, 87, 275
NEP, 10, 17, 19, 37-38, 48, 84, 117, 178, 185, 193, 270, 272; def. of, 16 n
Neurotics. *See* Mental hygiene.
Neverov, Alexander, quoted, 110
New Masses, quoted, 266
Newspapers, 42, 116, 286-89; for children, 245; radio, 94, 290; statistics of, 305. *See also* Wall newspapers.
Nicoleva, G., 107
Night clubs, 116
Nikiforov, Georgiy, quoted, 73
Nolen, John, quoted, 251-52
Novels, Soviet, 73
Novo Devichy Monastery, 100-01

Novy Mir, 42
Nurina, F., quoted, 107
Nurseries. *See* Crèches.
Nursery schools, 104, 108, 210

OBUCH INSTITUTE, 79-80
Obyvatelnye, meaning of, 297
Occupational therapy, 167
October, Great, 178, 224; meaning of, 15 n
Oedipus complex, 170, 173
Ogiz, meaning of, 93 n
OGPU, meaning of, 199
Oktobriionoks (Oktobrists), 214-15, 217, 226, 242-43, 245, 296; laws for, 214; def. of, 15 n
Old-age pensions, 74
Old Bolsheviks, 51-52, 118
Olenikov, 247
O'Neill, Eugene, 278
Operas, 278, 281
Order of Lenin, 22, 59, 64, 289
"Order of the Laughing Camel," 62
Ossinsky, N., quoted, 251, 255-58
Ostrovsky, A. N., 279

PALECH ARTISTS, 275
Palonskaya, L. G., 288
Panteliev, V., 247
Pasternak, Boris, 266
Parents, relation of, to children, 131, 172-73, 208-12
Park of Culture and Rest, 65
Parks, 253, 260-61
Partisan, def. of, 28
Peasants: and the new order, 9-10, 65-66, 96-97, 110-12, 118-19, 149, 275-76; classes of, 85 n. *See also* Kulaks.
Pedagogy. *See* Teaching.
Pedagogues, def. of, 155 n
Pelouze, Dr. P. S., quoted, 161
People's Commissariats, 40 n
Perversion, sexual, 114, 122, 155, 165, 169
Physiology, teaching, 149-62
Piatiletka. *See* Five Year Plans.
Pilnyak, Boris, 36, 268, 272; quoted, 29, 52, 111
Pioneer Pravda, 173, 215
Pioneers, 25, 42 n, 58, 137, 155, 156, 170, 173, 214-18, 226, 232, 242,

245, 249, 278, 290, 296; camp for, 147, 217-18, 234, 268; def. of, 15 n

Pisemsky, 101

Planning, Soviet, 9-16

Poetry, 185-86

Politburo, def. of, 25 n

Polygamy, 29, 127

Polytechnisation, 63, 89, 288, 297-98

Poputchik, explained, 29

Posters, 59, 150-52, 168, 206-07, 296. *See also* Museums.

Potilov, 247

Pragulchik, meaning of, 297

Prauda (daily), 42, 236, 237, 244, 245, 287; quoted, 66

Pregnancy, protection of, 151-52

Preobrazhensky, E., 121

Prisons, 186, 197, 201, 296. *See also* Rehabilitation Colony.

Private lives not to be rummaged into, 30-31, 32

Production, 10-11

Professional education, 93-94

Professors, Red, training of, 93

Profit, Soviet attitude toward, 17, 19, 38, 56-57, 186, 194

Proletariat: importance of, 21; in power, 11; needs of, 115; privileges of, 57, 71-72, 74, 78-81, 191, 226

Proletcult, meaning of, 297

Promfinplan. *See* Industrial-Financial Plan.

Propaganda, 34, 51, 56, 57, 100, 149, 203, 227, 243, 273, 291, 292-93. *See also* Museums; Posters; Slogans.

Property, Soviet attitude toward, 10, 12, 19-23, 118, 131, 138, 268, 297

Proriff, meaning of, 297

Prostitution, 28, 117, 125, 127, 155, 161; liquidating, 176-87

Psychiatry. *See* Mental hygiene.

Psycho-analysis, 157, 171

Psychology, creating a new, 11-13, 57-58

Public opinion, 58

Publicity, 62, 170

Pudovkin, V. I., 90

Punishment, 32, 35, 76-77, 79 n, 117, 130, 150, 163, 186, 193, 194, 197-203, 296; of children, 157, 174-75

Puppet shows, 275; need for, 100

Pushkin, A. S., 227

Rab Moskoa, quoted, 184

Rabotnitsa, def. of, 20; magazine, 104, 209, 288-89

Racial prejudice, 23-24, 295. *See also* Jews; Negroes.

Radek, Karl, 42, 275; quoted, 213, 280-81

Radio, 291; newspapers, 94, 290

Rakovsky, C. K. V., 94

Ramzin trial, 271

Red Army, 12-13, 152, 161, 246, 290

Red Fleet, 160

Red Love, 48, 134; quoted, 121

Rehabilitation Colony, 199-203

Religion in the USSR, 28, 46, 52, 53, 64, 96-97, 99-102, 129, 138, 158-59, 174, 202, 206-07, 209, 211, 215, 219-20, 221, 223, 231, 234, 246, 249, 286, 298

Revolution, Russian, def. of, 10 n

Road to Life (talkie), 38 n, 89, 192

Romanov, Panteleimon, 273; quoted, 112, 136, 137, 146

Rosenstein, Dr. Leo, quoted, 165-66, 167-70, 174

Roubashka, 54

RSFSR, meaning of, 56 n

Rouble, value of, 17 n

Ruderman, M., 241

Russia, conditions in old, 24, 72-73, 95-96, 109, 131, 176-77, 205, 212, 227-28, 247, 248, 269-71, 283, 285-86, 294-95

Ryazanov, D., quoted, 124

SABOTAGE, 35, 75-77, 79 n

Sacco and Vanzetti, 207

Samokritika, def. of, 58

Schmidt, Vera, quoted, 157

Schubert, F. P., 227, 274

Schumann, R. A., 88

Scottsboro case, 87

Scriabin, A. N., 101, 272

Secret police. *See* Cheka; OGPU.

Self-criticism, 58, 246, 291, 296

Semashko, N. A., quoted, 165

Semyonov, S., 73

Seredniak, def. of, 85 n

Servants: in the old order, 103-04, 112; in the USSR, 20, 48

Seventh of November, 54, 218

Sex: Soviet attitude towards, 171; education, 149-62, 169, (of children) 155-59

Sex relations, 27, 112-36 *passim*, 167, 171-72; early license in, 117-18; old Russian attitude towards, 115-16, 167; rules for, 121-22. *See also* Divorce; Marriage; Prostitution.

Seyfullina, Lydia, 268 (quoted)

Shaginian, Marietta, 266; quoted, 56, 70-71

Shakespeare, 88, 227, 278, 280-81

Shatsky (Prof. S. T.) School, 207-08

Shaving clean, 45

Shaw, G. B., 65, 227, 278, 287; quoted, 55

Shishkov, V., quoted, 132

Shock brigades, brigaders, 52, 59, 60, 63-65, 69, 106, 112, 167, 170, 218, 232, 248

Siberia, 97

Simon, Dr., quoted, 172-75

Slogans, 62, 188, 211, 264. *See also* Museums.

Smedovich, S. N., 107, 121

Smith, Jessica, quoted, 96, 118

Smoking, 169, 298

Social defence, measures of, 198. *See also* Punishment.

Social Democratic party, 16 n, 234

Social rank, Soviet, 19

Social work, 44, 55, 167, 291

Socialism and communism, 16 n

Societies: for Down with Illiteracy, 285; of the Friends of Children, 184; for the Militant Godless, 25

Soldiers, new attitude toward, 12, 160, 246

Solev'yev, S. M. and V. F., 101

Solofki, 186, 296

Solomon quoted, 124

Soltz, A. N., 121; quoted, 38-39, 76, 124, 140, 141, 147-48

Songs, children's, 214, 219, 223-24

Sosmatelnyye, meaning of, 297

Sovhoz, meaning of, 233

Soviet, def. of, 16 n

Soviet Union. *See* USSR.

Sovnarcom, meaning of, 296

Speculation, 17, 56, 186, 192, 193

Speed scale, 60

Sports, 103, 115, 200, 256

Stalin, J. V., 49, 58 (quoted), 91, 181, 271; quoted, 93, 297; wife of, 101, 116

Stalingrad, 253

Standardisation, 39

Stanislavsky, K. S., 279

Stari Bolsheviki, 51-52, 118

Strong, A. L., quoted, 177

Students, 83-94; on sex relations, 124-28

Stutterers, 165, 170

Suicide, 35-37, 155, 170

Superiority, Comsomol, 53-55

Superstitions, 149, 153, 159

Swearing discouraged, 35, 298

Svoboda, 72

Syphilis. *See* Venereal diseases.

TADJIKS, 111, 285

Tattooing, 202

Teachers, 212; child's attitude towards, 212-14; training of, 88-89, 288

Team spirit, 62

Technika, 42

Theatre, 182, 275-82, 288; children's, 226-28; need for, 100

Thieves, 190, 192, 201, 202

Tichailov, 247

Tolstoy, Alexei, quoted, 50, 84

Tolstoy, L. N., 44, 278, 279

Tovarishch, 45, 49

Towing expeditions, 64, 216

Town-planning, 147, 251-62

Toys, new, 104, 229, 231-34, 288; old, 219, 231-32

Traitors, 186, 220, 296

Transportation workers, 80

Tretyakov, Sergei, 106, 265

Troshin, Nikolai, 236

Trotsky, L. D., 24, 36, 121, 138, 148, 220, 273; quoted, 137, 275

Trud, 105 n

Tschaikowsky, P. I., 101

Turkmenistan, 159

Two-timers, 186, 201

Udarnaya brigada, *udarnik*, meaning of, 63

Universities, 83-94
 Uspensky, quoted, 73
 USSR : change, policy of, 13-15, 293-94 ; enemies of, 75-76, 271 ; map of industrial towns in, 257 ; money rewards in, 21-22, 47, 57, 61, 76, 104, 193, 201, 265, 290 ; other rewards in, 59-62. *See also* Order of Lenin ; planning in, 9-15 ; population of, 14, 23-24 ; def. of, 17 *n*
 Uzbekistan, 107, 153, 160
 VANZETTI, SACCO AND, 207
 Vassily-Buglai, 272
Vechernaya Moskva (daily), 288
 Venereal diseases, 150-62 *passim*, 181-82
 Vengrov, Nathan, quoted, 242-43
 Vinogradskaya, Paulina, 108, 122 ; quoted, 98, 127
 Virtue. *See* Morals.
 Vocational guidance, 79-80, 169, 229
 Voloshin, Maximilian, quoted, 92
Vreditel, meaning of, 297
Vyat na buxir, meaning of, 297
Vydaishenstvo, meaning of, 297
 WALL NEWSPAPERS, 93, 173, 209-10, 245, 284, 290-91
 War : Soviet attitude toward, 221-22, 233-34 ; phrases, use of, 297
 War Communism, 10, 118, 128, 178 ; def. of, 16 *n*
 Way of life, 27
 Wealth, Soviet attitude toward, 19-20, 296
 Webb, Mrs. Sidney, quoted, 58
 Wells, H. G., quoted, 187
 Wertham, F. I., quoted, 168
 Williams, A. R., quoted, 65-66
 Williams, Dr. F. E., quoted, 163, 187
 Wilson, Edmund, quoted, 275
 Witch doctors, 159
Without Cherry Blossom, quoted, 112, 135-36, 137, 146
 Woman's Day, 54

Women : clubs for, 106 ; education of, 108, 110, 303-04 ; emancipation of, 12, 46, 51-52, 95-113, 208 ; in agriculture, 106 ; in industry, 306 ; in political positions, 107, 306 ; work, attitude of, towards, 104, 112, 125, 128, 130 ; work suitable for, 104-05. *See also* Divorce ; Family ; Marriage ; Prostitution ; Sex education ; Sex relations.

Woody, Thomas, 207 *n*
 Wordsworth, William, 247
 Work, Soviet attitude toward, 19, 21-23, 29-31, 33, 56-82, 86-87, 110, 113, 125, 128, 214-15
 Working classes. *See* Proletariat.
 Working day, length of, 34, 78, 285
 Working week, length of, 78, 285
 World Revolution, 45, 63, 72, 148, 301
 World War, effect of, on marriage, 139-40
 Writers, 22, 263-72 *passim* ; for children, 235-48 ; Assoc. of Proletarian, 270-72

YAROSLAVSKY, EMEL'YAN, 25, 121 ; quoted, 17, 20, 25-38 *passim*, 99, 124-25, 139
 Yessenin, Sergei, 36, 273
 Yudenich, 71

Za Industrialisatziu, 42
Za Kommunisticheskoe Prosveshcheniye (daily), 288
Za Zdorovui Buit, 152, 153 ; quoted, 108, 145-62 *passim*, 178-86 *passim*
 ZAGS, 119, 139, 151 ; meaning of, 104 *n*
 Zalkind, Dr. A. B., quoted, 121, 166-67
 Zelenko, Alexander, quoted, 261-62
 Zetkin, Clara, quoted, 97, 114-15, 185, 264-65, 269-70, 283
 Zinoviev, G. E., 148
 Zorka, 245

